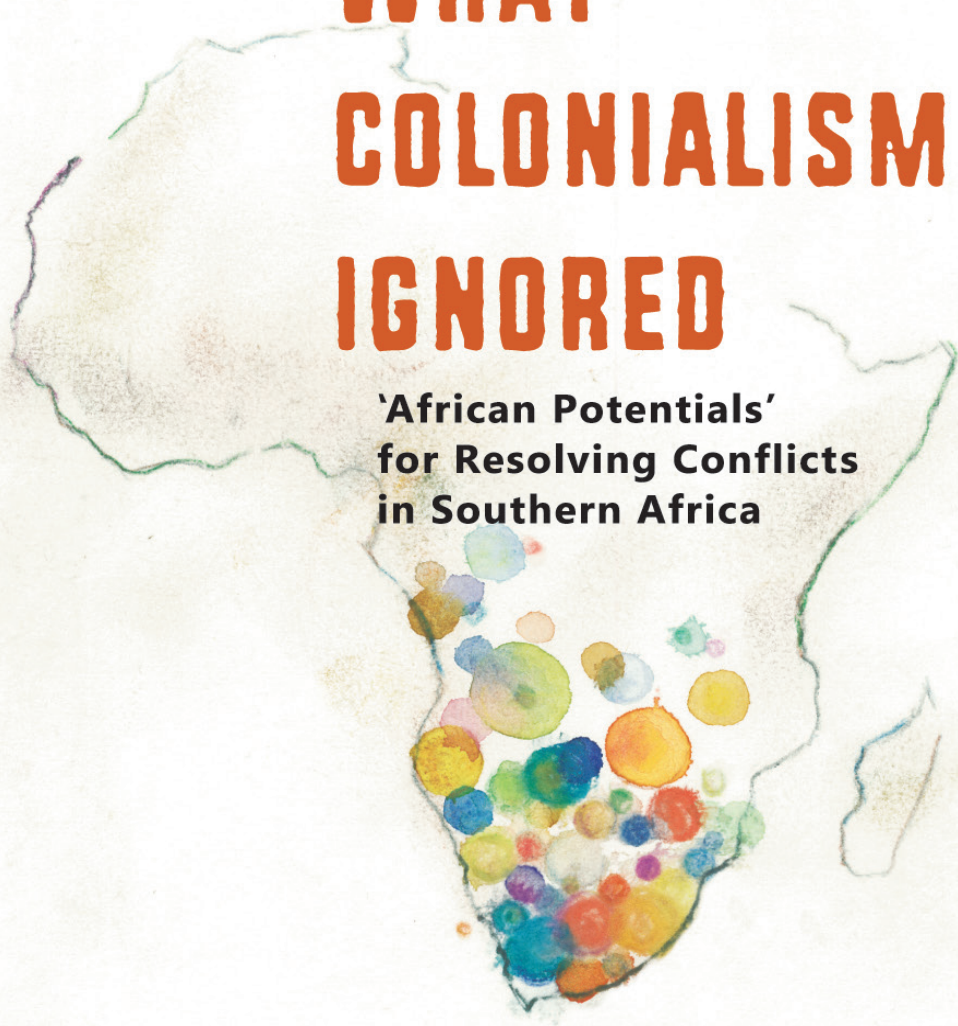


WHAT COLONIALISM IGNORED

**'African Potentials'
for Resolving Conflicts
in Southern Africa**



**Edited by
Sam Moyo and Yoichi Mine**

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Edited by

Sam Moyo
&
Yoichi Mine

In collaboration



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*This book is dedicated to the fond memory of
Professor Sam Moyo (1954–2015).*

Yoichi Mine and all contributors

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List of Abbreviations

AFRICOM: United States Africa Command
ANC: African National Congress
AR: Affirmative Repositioning
AREX: Agricultural Research and Extension Services
ART: Anti-Retroviral Treatment
ATM: Automated Teller Machine
AU: African Union
BEE: Black Economic Empowerment
BSA: British South Africa Company
CA: Communal Area
CIO: Chief Information Officer
COSATU: Congress of South African Trade Unions
CPSA: Communist Party of South Africa
CSO: Central Statistics Office
CSVR: Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation
DA: District Administrator
DRC: Democratic Republic of the Congo
DTA: Democratic Turnhalle Alliance
ESAP: Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
ET: Emergency Taxi
EU: European Union
FDI: Foreign Direct Investment
FPTP: First-Past-the-Post
FRELIMO: Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (Mozambique Liberation Front)
FTLRP: Fast Track Land Reform Programme
GDP: Gross Domestic Product
GNU: Government of National Unity
GSWA: German Southwest Africa
HIV/AIDS: Human Immunodeficiency Virus /Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
HRV: Human Rights Violation

HRW: Human Rights Watch
ICC: International Criminal Court
ICU: Industrial and Commercial Workers Union
IJR: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation
IMF: International Monetary Fund
ISI: Import Substitution Industrialisation
JSPS: Japan Society for Promotion of Science
LEP: Look East Policy
LSCF: Large Scale Commercial Farms/Farming
MDC: Movement for Democratic Change
MMD: Movement for Multiparty Democracy
NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NDR: National Democratic Revolution
NER: North Eastern Rhodesia
NGO: Non-Governmental Organisations
NRA: Newly Resettled Areas
NUDO: National Unity Democratic Organisation
NWR: North Western Rhodesia
OCD: OvaHerero/Ovambanderu Council for Dialogue
PAC: Pan Africanist Congress
PPP: Public Private Partnerships
PR: Proportional Representation
R2P: Responsibility to Protect
RBZ: Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe
RDP: Reconstruction and Development Programme
RPF: Rwanda Patriotic Front
RTGS: Real-Time Gross Settlement
SACP: South African Communist Party
SADC: Southern African Development Community
SAIRR: South African Institute of Race Relations
SANNC: South African Native National Congress
STI: Sexually Transmitted Infections
SWAPO: South West Africa People's Organisation
TRC: Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UDF: United Democratic Front
UK: United Kingdom

UN: United Nations
UNDP: United Nations Development Programme
UNECA: United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund
UNITA: União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola
(National Union for the Total Independence of Angola)
UNTAG: United Nations Transition Assistance Group
USA: United States of America
USAFRICOM: United States Africa Command
USD: United States Dollars
VIDCO: Village Development Committees
WADCO: Ward Development Committees
ZANU-PF: Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front
ZAPU: Zimbabwe African People's Union
ZFU: Zimbabwe Farmers Union
ZIMPLATS: Zimbabwe Impala Platinum Subsidiary
ZWD: First Zimbabwean Dollar
ZWL: Fourth Zimbabwean Dollar
ZWN: Second Zimbabwean Dollar
ZWR: Third Zimbabwean Dollar

Preface

In 2011 we embarked on a research project with the core concept, 'African potentials'.¹ The notion may have struck some as a little unusual. But for the members of this project, there were ample and legitimate reasons to put forward this key concept.

Contemporary Africa, particularly since the 1990s, has been riddled with frequent civil and ethnic conflicts, religious clashes and resource disputes. The Rwandan genocide, where 500,000 to 800,000 people lost their lives, is still raw in our memory. The civil wars in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Somalia were interminable. South Sudan finally won independence in July 2011 after more than 20 years of civil war, but has since descended into another civil war in December 2013 with no end in sight. In recent months, there have been major journalistic reports of violence in the Republic of Central Africa, as well as incidents of terrorism by Boko Haram using explosives in northern Nigeria. These atrocities aside, there have been political sparring, jostling over natural resources, skirmishes between agriculturists and pastoralists over land use, disputes over nature conservation between the local people and the administration, which all have resulted in massive numbers of locally displaced people and refugees.

These events have brought about interventions by the international community into African societies, ranging from troops, truce and peace treaty negotiations, rebuilding of postwar institutions, judicial conciliation through the International Criminal Court, to various mediation efforts by non-governmental organisations (NGOs). These interventions have been propelled by ideas of liberalism, democracy and 'justice accorded through the rule of law', which are all based on norms and values of Western origin. A corollary was that a democratic state with a mature market economy would no longer engage in war. This way of thinking presumes the individual as autonomous and endowed with universal

¹ Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (S), 'Comprehensive Area Studies on Coexistence and Conflict Resolution Realizing African Potentials' (2011–2015. Project Coordinator: Itaru Ohta).

human rights, and that the sovereign state was the amalgamation of contracts between such individuals and the state. Here, the law is absolute, and each individual is an independent entity, cut away from his or her local community. The interventions by the international community aim to achieve such an order, presumed to be universal, supreme, and inimitable.

At the same time, these interventions have assumed zero capacity and means on the part of the African people to coexist by solving disputes themselves, and that therefore the international community has to provide what is correct to them. Because of this, interventions are always meted out in standardised prescriptions. Each step of conflict resolution and coexistence is regarded as simply technical, so that it suffices for the international community to send in the appropriate professionals.

When such a universal and prescriptive intervention fails to function, it is concluded that the African people are to be blamed for their lack of receptivity and execution. Disregarding the fact that these approaches derive from the ethos of Western modernisation, it has been the general tendency not only to neglect non-Western methods for realising peace, but to exclude them. International interventions seem to be based on the understanding that the African societies are 'deficient'. The irony is that the conflict resolution interventions by the international community have largely ended in failure.

What is needed here is for us to find inspiration ourselves from the actual daily life of the African people, that is to say we must basically turn around our way of thinking. We must focus on the knowledge and institutions that the African people themselves have created and executed for conflict resolution and coexistence. The African people have autonomously dealt with conflicts and coexistence through their own prescriptions and here lies what we understand as the African potentials. African knowledge and institutions have often proved effective historically, and we believe that the potentials can be applied in dealing with contemporary conflict resolution, reconciliation and remediation of society, as well as the reestablishment of social order. To look at the daily lives of the local people and to focus on what these ordinary people do, is to actually challenge the majority discourse in the international

community for restoring peace that the ‘Africans are passive and incompetent’, from which followed that the application of universal and technical Western methods was necessary.

However, we do not wish to argue that there exists in Africa an inherent and unique immutable wisdom. To begin with, the knowledge and institutions deemed ‘traditional’ are in reality continuously reborn and dynamically re-created. To romanticise and to essentialise the African knowledge and institutions is most deplorable. Neither do we wish to argue that exogenous knowledge and institutions, as well as interventions by the international community, have all proved to be dysfunctional because they had been imposed. We must first overcome such insular dualism.

In the search for the African potentials, we have preferred to use the term, ‘indigenous’, rather than ‘traditional’. Indigenous denotes that customs, culture, thoughts and norms have been created and practised by the local people. In other words, indigenous norms and behaviour need not be traditional. The people have interacted with the changes in their surrounding ecological and social environments, and have created new knowledge and behaviour for improved living, through awareness towards both the new and exogenous, and the tried-and-true. To call something indigenous, it must be what the local people create and deploy for their daily convenience.

Therefore, the knowledge and institutions that we regard as embodiments of the African potentials are never immutable entities, but rather, are born through constant contact with the external world. For example, Western modernisation and Islam have both been instrumental in this process of formation and reformation, which continues to this day. We call this capacity to constantly transform the ‘interface function’.

Thus our mission was a research project with the two keywords, ‘African potentials’ and ‘interface function’. It was absolutely necessary in the project to strive for empiricism and objectivity in the description of the African potentials as well as to strive to expand our philosophy and concepts beyond Western modernistic centralism. Our grand goal was to identify the African potentials from the daily existence of the African people, describe this in detail and to offer this to the public to be made available to our fellow contemporaries as well as to future generations.

We have organised annually the African Forum in diverse host cities to exchange ideas with various African researchers as well as professionals working in peace building, etc., so that we may make clear and propagate our core concept of the African potentials. The first Forum was in Nairobi in 2011, the second in Harare in 2012, the third in Juba in 2013, the fourth in Yaounde in 2014 and the fifth in Addis Ababa in 2015.

This volume was the fruit of the Harare Forum, held 8–9 December 2011, focusing mostly on Southern Africa. We discussed the influence of colonial rule, settler economies and apartheid policies that spanned several hundred years which structured the governing system, and the reality that the post-apartheid state was built on this system, that eventually gave rise to local resistance movements we indeed regard as manifestations of the African potentials. The local movements include land rights struggles, Zimbabwean peasants' striving for their life after the land reform, and other social experiments to overcome the racism and xenophobia. Here the African potentials embody the struggle to confront a system of inequality and suppression, as well as the process to free diverse and contrasting people for them to coexist. The readers of this volume surely will come to grasp the dynamics of African potentials.

* * *

When we organised the Harare Forum, we sought advice from the co-editor of this volume, Professor Sam Moyo. Yoichi Mine, the other co-editor and our colleague, was good friends with Sam, and told him his cooperation was necessary for the Harare Forum, with which he obliged. Itaru Ohta and Motoji Matsuda visited Harare in August 2011 and explained to Sam about our notion of the African potentials. The Harare Forum was born of our discussions and exchange of ideas for bringing about the conference. It was not possible without Sam's enthusiastic participation and his vast network of researchers.

Sadly, Sam is no longer with us. He was involved in a grave traffic accident on 19 November 2015 while attending an international conference held in New Dehli. He died three days later. His departure

seriously impacted not only our African potentials project but also all of the research that was to explore the political, economic and social role of the Global South in the world (see *CODESRLA Bulletin*, No. 3 & 4, 2015). This volume was already close to completion at the time of Sam's death. He had put in so much energy and time for this volume. I think he greatly enjoyed working with Japanese and African scholars of this project in his late life.

Since the Harare Forum in 2011, Sam was active in each of the African Forum meetings, leading the discussions. He was a visiting professor at Kyoto University for March 2015, where we discussed and furthered our friendship and mutual appreciation. During the stay, Sam also visited several cities and villages in Japan, interacted with farmers and social activists, and became deeply respected by them. The first phase of the African potentials project is reaching its completion on 31 March 2016, and a final international symposium is scheduled in Kyoto on 23–24 January 2016 to make public the findings from our research. Of course Sam was to have attended this meeting. We had promised to celebrate the publication of this volume together, which has now turned into an impossible dream. We express here our deepest respect and appreciation for Sam's academic contributions. We dedicate this volume to Sam who most enjoyed drinking and smoking and who was always approachable and unassuming – a totally warm and open friend.

4 January 2016

Itaru Ohta
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Kyoto University

Introduction: African Potentials for Conflict Resolution and Transformation

Sam Moyo and Yoichi Mine

1.1. Introduction

Afro-pessimism and Afro-optimism are two sides of the same coin. Both attitudes have been developed by forces outside Africa. On the one hand, we have the invented image of a ‘conflicted’ Africa that spread after the end of the Cold War. This notion is based on narrow conceptual frameworks that attribute violent conflicts to internal ‘dysfunction’ and ‘barbarism’ in African societies. On the other hand, the image of a ‘rising Africa’ has become popular in recent years as the continent has begun to export primary goods to the global market on a much larger scale and to score markedly high growth rates. However, the conceptual frameworks of this notion are also limited to a shallow causality of trade expansion, prosperity and stability. In reality, Afro-optimism can be easily shattered once the present way of extroverted development in Africa proves to be unsustainable. While powers in global capitalism currently regard Africa as the land of opportunity, their intervention cannot but produce and aggravate contradictions across African society, and when conditions spin out of control, they will simply abandon their hopefulness and regress to pessimism.

The bottom line is the imperative to devise African solutions to African problems; there is no other way. African initiatives to address

violence, poverty, inequalities and other challenges are under way but are not yet sufficient. In this regard, it is crucial to note that new forms of geo-politics are emerging in the context of the new ‘scramble for Africa’, in which global capitalist classes seek to acquire extraordinary shares of land and resources. In terms of trade, aid and foreign direct investment (FDI), the new Asian economies have started to display a massive presence, making Africa’s international relations more diversified, and gradually detaching African nations from conventional Euro-American influence. This provides Africa with strategic opportunities that should be carefully handled.

With regard to the nature of the transformation of African society, it is important to understand that the continent has a complex mix of diversity and commonality. Although African peoples have been exposed to a wide variety of eco-systems and have experienced unique paths through pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial histories along with distinctive accumulation trajectories, all regions share rather similar socio-political structures and threats, including the late-colonial bifurcation of urban and rural spaces (Mamdani 1996, 2012), the neoliberal restructuring of policy regimes in recent times, and the persistence of external influences including military intervention under the pretext of responsibility to protect (R2P). The common challenge throughout Africa is to release potentials of people’s agency for solving Africa’s problems, while transcending parochial identities and going beyond the dichotomy of ‘tradition and modernity’.

This book, born from an endeavour to take up this challenge, is unique in that it reflects a gradual shift in the centre of gravity away from the Euro-American scholarship to an intellectual collaboration within an alternative ‘East-South’ frame. Since 2011, a network of African scholars and Asian (Japanese) scholars of African studies, combining their expertise in history, anthropology, sociology and political economy, has organised African regional forums in Nairobi,

Harare, Juba, Yaoundé and Addis Ababa, as well as several gatherings in Kyoto, Japan. Through intensive discussions, the network gradually developed the notion of ‘African potentials’ as a way to explore mechanisms that are utilised to bring about ‘conflict resolution and co-existence’ in the African settings from below.¹ This publication is particularly meaningful as it is the first-ever serious academic book on African political economy jointly written by African scholars and Japanese Africanists. As such, the book may serve as a model for future Afro-Asian academic cooperation.

This introductory chapter presents the basic motivation and frameworks that guide our thinking. In the next section, we discuss the nature of violent conflicts in contemporary Africa, paying attention to the transformative dynamics of society. We then evaluate three existing approaches for addressing violence in Africa, and bring forward an alternative vision that we label ‘African potentials’. After presenting a tentative definition of this concept, we elaborate on its meanings from various spatial and temporal perspectives. African potentials are realised only when structural violence embedded within global capitalism is addressed in fundamental ways. Structural violence has been entrenched in the African countryside by way of three distinctive accumulation trajectories, which seem to lead to a convergence. Elements of African potentials can be found in long historical processes, and we note that the historical mobility, flexibility and openness of African society have contributed to the everyday practice of conflict resolution, which persists even today despite colonial and post-colonial distortions. The final section provides summaries of the chapters that follow.

1.2. Violence and Social Disarticulation in Africa

After the end of the Cold War, Africa experienced a spate of violent conflicts and a massive loss of human life. In 1994, about

seven hundred thousand people were massacred in Rwanda by people wielding guns and machetes, while the so-called international community remained on the sidelines and watched the unfolding events. In the same year, South Africa witnessed the first general election in its history in which the disenfranchised African majority exercised their voting rights, and Nelson Mandela was inaugurated as President after 27 years of imprisonment. The world celebrated the abolition of political apartheid at the southern tip of Africa. At the time, these two events were presented as mirror opposites: Rwanda's painful regression to pre-modern 'tribal violence' and South Africa's delightful rise to modern 'liberal democracy'.

However, one must trace back history to unravel the complexity of causation (Cooper 2000). On top of the fact that all African countries share certain forms of colonial legacy, the Rwandan genocide was deliberately prepared by the agents of a modern state machinery, while the South African transition in the early 1990s barely succeeded in containing conflicting aspirations and emotions, including the 'tribal identities' of Afrikaners and Zulus. More than two decades have now passed, and the social order has been restored in Rwanda, however suffocating it may be. On the other hand, the social life of South African neoliberal cities is tormented by rampant crime, insecurities and growing inequalities. When one walks down the streets of Harare, the capital city of Zimbabwe, a country that has been classified as a 'failed state' by Western powers, one feels much safer than in neighbouring South Africa.² The African conflict regime is complex, ambiguous and often paradoxical.

If we take a bird's eye view, it must be acknowledged that the entire continent has witnessed violent turbulence in the past few decades. Civil wars ravaged Liberia and Sierra Leone for years, resulting in mass killings and brutal mutilations. Soon after the genocide in Rwanda, the fighting spilled over and multitudes of refugees moved into the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of

the Congo (DRC), where warlordism and foreign intervention burst into the 'Great War of Africa' in 1998. In the Horn of Africa, civil war in Somalia dragged the country into a state of anarchy and it has remained so since 1991. In the 2000s, relatively 'stable' countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya and Zimbabwe were afflicted by election-related violence on the streets. South Sudan has been haunted by persistent civil strife even after its historic independence in 2011. In the 2010s, violent conflict in the northern half of the continent tends to develop through a more active involvement of Islamist organisations. Northern Nigeria has become a battlefield between Boko Haram and security forces, Central Africa has plunged into a persistent civil war between the Muslim and the Christian militia, and the fighting in Mali and other Sahel countries intensified after Gaddafi's government in Libya was toppled in 2011.

On the surface, these conflicts appear to confirm the notion that the continent is following the path of Samuel Huntington's self-fulfilling prophecy of the 'clash of civilisations', which referred only to Western, Islamic and Confucian civilisations, since he actually considered the African civilisation to only 'possibly' be a civilisation (Huntington 1993). This view implies that Africa is merely a battlefield for other civilisations, despite the fact that the African indigenous cosmology (resonating with traditional animism in Japan, for example) has the potentials to embrace all humankind and nature and to restore the balance that is needed (Chapter 8 of this volume).

Meanwhile, a quarter-century after the collapse of the Soviet regime, global capitalism has begun to announce its triumph over the continent with the markedly optimistic narrative of a 'rising Africa'. The GDP growth rates of African countries surpassed an average of five per cent during the first decade and a half of the 21st century, largely due to the rising demand for natural resources in Asian economies. However, the present growth, induced by the export of primary products, is precipitating a renewed insecurity and

vulnerability in African society. As wealth is increasingly possessed by a handful of land and mineral ‘grabblings’ barons around economic enclaves, frustration is fermenting among the alienated masses. Furthermore, should the commodity bubble burst, a sharp shrinkage of external resource flows will make the lives of peasants and workers, as well as the positions of the ruling classes, much more precarious in Africa.

Another important dimension is the rise of Sinophobia and Sinophilia in almost every African country that has come to accommodate Chinese goods, labour and capital at an unprecedented rate. However, the fact is that global monopoly capital, both Western and Eastern, is capitalising on the ‘investment opportunities’ created by neoliberal policies, thereby asserting control over land and resources in Africa. Indeed, the entry of China is being used as leverage to impose a renewed, orderly ‘partition’ of the African land that is deemed to be more ‘equitable’ for all capitalist speculators inside and outside of Africa. The ‘New Scramble for Africa’ is changing the landscape of the African countryside as land concentration leads towards a convergence of historical trajectories of capital accumulation based on large-scale farming and transnational agribusiness (Chapter 2). This process is the most significant factor in creating a setting for violent conflict and renewed geopolitical militarisation in Africa (Moyo et al. 2012).

In 14th century Europe, the outbreak of the plague is said to have killed approximately 35 million people, while the Second World War claimed more than 60 million lives in both Europe and Asia. Compared with the magnitude of human suffering in those catastrophes of human history, the following remark on Africa made by Julius Nyerere seems to hold absolutely true: the ‘surprising thing is not that there has been so much political instability in Africa but that there has been so much stability, although this fact is less publicised internationally’ (Nyerere 2000, p. xiv). In the past quarter-

century, however, portions of the relatively peaceful African countryside, in which Nyerere's revolution was firmly anchored, have been successively shaken by groups of rebels and armed rogues, setting aside more disciplined attempts such as those in rural Zimbabwe to address the lingering colonial legacy. At the same time, imperialist forces are all the more eager to prey on the continent's land and resources, taking advantage of internal strife among Africans. The continent is entering an age of precarious transition and dynamic change, with the focus of the struggle located in the countryside.

According to Thomas Hobbes, the nature of foul weather does not lie in one or two showers but in an inclination to rain of many days together. Likewise, the war of 'every man against every man' consists not in a single battle but in a tract of time during which the will of a party to contend by battle is sufficiently known. 'All other time is peace' (Hobbes 1651/1996, p. 84). Although the political entity that Hobbes called *Leviathan* is widely regarded as the prototypal model of a modern nation-state, his work was written as a personal political manifesto during the bloody British Civil Wars that continued for two decades. While centuries-long European wars eventually gave rise to the state system, consisting of internally homogeneous sovereign states, the specific shape of the political order that the African foul weather would produce is still unknown.

The continuous engagement and intervention of outside forces make Africa's future much more complicated and unpredictable. But there is no need for pessimism, given the resilience of African peoples and nations. The aim of this book is to reveal the strong undercurrents of social processes that mediate conflicts and enable transformation throughout the recent history of Africa. The study explores what we may call 'African potentials' to transform a society facing an escalating set of externally driven and internally evolving contradictions.

1.3. Three Predominant Approaches

Today's African society is extremely vulnerable to violent ruptures at local, national and regional dimensions. There are three predominant approaches to understanding the nature of violent confrontations, and each approach comes with its own set of presuppositions about the wrong and right ways to address them. The first is the attitude of political *laissez-faire*, combined with the notion of Africa's 'backwardness', which has been rife in the discourse of popular journalism as well as in academic writings on Africa in the West. In this perspective, Africa is regarded as a continent of self-destruction; African society has been intrinsically emotional, irrational and abusive since ancient times and will remain so forever. A more sophisticated variation of this perspective is the theory of neopatrimonialism, a mainstream theoretical framework found in contemporary African studies, which is based on a Weberian categorisation of human societies and the Eurocentric perception of the 'otherness' of non-Western societies.³ Except for a few serious academic works, most writings that reflect this line of culturalist thinking consider the essence of African society to be timeless, unchangeable and incapable of creating a new order. If there is anything worth engaging in Africa, it is land, not people; it is the natural resources and farmland in Africa that attract the keen attention of global capitalism, and a reductionist cultural discourse obscures this reality (Chapter 2).

Behind the backwardness thesis often lies a Malthusian fear of population explosion in the periphery of the global capitalist system. For example, Robert Kaplan's superficial observation of conflict in West Africa in the early 1990s cast a chill over the post-Cold War euphoria in the West and raised an alarm over 'the coming anarchy', a doomsday situation in which the entire planet would suffer overpopulation, uncontrolled urbanisation, scarcity of resources,

environmental decay, diseases, trans-border crime, etc. (Kaplan 1994). Such Afro-pessimism is unwarranted and cannot be empirically substantiated. However, we note that this deep-seated fear on the part of the West is a reflection of real frustrations facing the majority of the world's population, a seething mass of semi-proletariat living in the countryside who undergoes accelerated pauperisation and marginalisation. These are not faceless masses but individual human persons enduring the ongoing processes of enclosure and structural neglect. The current trajectory could lead to the genocide of half of humanity unless a democratic, labour-absorbing type of agricultural revolution firmly based on peasant production is pursued (Amin 1990, 2011; Moyo and Yeros 2005).

The second approach to addressing African conflict is based on the perspective of universal justice and human rights. Based on the flawed perception that local people are unable to realise post-conflict reconciliation on their own, this approach seeks to implant universal principles from above. This is typically shown in the legal action taken by the International Criminal Court (ICC). Since its foundation in 2002, the Court has prosecuted only Africans, including President Omar al-Bashir of Sudan as well as President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya and his Deputy, William Ruto. The problem is not their responsibility for gross violations of human rights, which is undeniable, but that the practitioners of international laws and human rights seldom pay attention to the attempts at social healing taking place at the village and street levels, despite the fact that most atrocities were committed at these local levels. This approach also absolves external actors which generate the structural injustices underlying these conflicts.

Another variation of the top-down approach involves constitutional engineering to contain political confrontations and emotions, such as power-sharing arrangements to 'normalise' war-torn states (Chapter 7). Although the arrangements can be negotiated

by local politicians at the mediation of a regional organisation, theorists of social engineering still tend to regard their prescriptions as one-size-fits-all recipes (Mine et al. eds 2013). For instance, Paul Collier comes up with an extreme proposal suggesting that the Western players should force undemocratic leaders of African governments to accept election results by threatening military intervention while trusting the ‘rational’ behaviours of dictators (Collier 2009). In the realm of economics, the proposition of individual property rights propounded by Hernando de Soto has been favoured by the World Bank and has wielded substantial influence on the policy making of national governments in Africa (De Soto 2000; see also Chapter 4). Certain forms of justice, electoral democracy as well as the stabilisation of the land tenure system are all required for any government to function well, but the problem is that most of these top-down attempts presuppose a convergence on an idealised institution of Western liberal democracy, rather than focus on developing hybrid systems accommodating local needs and participatory dynamics.

Thirdly, we consider a new traditionalist approach. In historical and anthropological studies, it is widely accepted that many of the seemingly ‘African’ practices were in fact ‘invented’ under colonial power relations (Hobsbawm and Ranger eds 1983; see also Mamdani 2012). In numerous post-colonial situations, there have been attempts to realise conflict resolution and reconciliation at a societal level by resurrecting and reconstructing past practices of community justice through a ‘reinvention’ of traditions. Attempts that have fully involved rural villagers include the *Gaçaça* court in Rwanda, a community justice system established in 2001 to speed up the trials of suspects of genocide crime (Clark 2010; see also Chapter 10). In addition to South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), African countries such as Uganda, Chad, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Ghana, the DRC, Morocco and Liberia have established post-

conflict truth commissions (Chapter 6). Aside from these formal experiments, traditional rituals have been explicitly utilised to heal the wounds of civil war at the village level in Mozambique (Hayner 2001, pp. 197-204). Although these tradition-based practices of conflict resolution reflect bottom-up ingenuity, such institutions also have the risk of falling prey to post-colonial despots in the shadow of late colonial bifurcation of the ‘modern’ world of urban citizens and the ‘traditional’ world of rural peasants (Mamdani 1996).

The second universal approach and the third new traditionalist approach appear to be irreconcilable as opposites but, in reality, these two perspectives are jointly embedded within the single space of post-colonial Africa. The contradictions between modernity and tradition are especially palpable in Southern Africa, where indigenous communities have been exposed for more than a century to the political and cultural influence of the settler communities. Furthermore, in this region, the duality of the colonial rule has sometimes resulted in the unintended consequence of strengthening the practice of ‘divide and rule’, as demonstrated in the case of the Herero and Ovambo division in Namibia (Chapter 5). People claim their own traditions in a way that is historically justifiable, but often rendered inflexible and exploited by the overarching, old and new rulers.

In the remainder of this chapter, we propose an alternative approach to understanding the conflict dynamics of African society. Although this project is not meant to elaborate a general theory of politics, we do aim to produce a certain frame for emancipatory politics in Africa based on a new conception of potentiality.

1.4. African Potentials: An Alternative Approach?

African potentials are tentatively defined as capabilities of Africans for achieving solutions to contradictions among the people,

utilising indigenous knowledge on human relations that has continuously transformed and accumulated at the level of people's everyday lives. The development of the art of conflict resolution and transformation has persisted throughout pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial times. In exploring African potentials, two dimensions are worth elaborating upon: one related to space and another related to time.

With regard to spatial potentials, it may be useful to begin our discussion with the theory of violence formulated by the scholar of peace studies, Johan Galtung. In his view, violence is present when humans are exposed to external influences so that their actual states of physical and psychological existence is suppressed to levels that are below their potentials. 'Violence is here defined as the cause of the difference between the potential and the actual' (Galtung 1969, p. 168). A further distinction is made between *personal* or *direct* violence and *structural* or *indirect* violence (ibid., p. 170). When the military kills innocent civilians, that homicide is an act of personal violence. When rural children die of avoidable infectious diseases in the periphery of global capitalism, structural violence is committed; the children's potential to enjoy longevity is crushed by an external influence, structural poverty in this case. Similarly, the infringement upon food sovereignty in a nation of the South that inflicts avoidable starvation on people is a clear manifestation of structural violence. While structural violence is often accompanied by personal violence and vice versa, these two notions of violence should not be confused. Absence of personal violence and absence of structural violence are both desirable goals of global transformation; the former is called 'negative peace' while the latter is termed 'positive peace' (ibid., p. 183).⁴

The concept of structural violence illuminates the anti-human nature of poverty and exploitation, which are regarded here as forms of violence, even if they are caused by a system with no explicit

intention to harm individuals; capitalists normally do not beat workers with their whips in person. Unequal exchange embedded in the global trade system and the polarisation of the world into the centre, in which autocentric development is on track, and the periphery, in which disarticulation permeates economy and society, do exist but may not be visible unless we look at reality through the lens of a scientific theory of global capitalism (Amin 1976). Personal violence may function even when no one resorts to physical violence; a threat to use violence may suffice to fetter the actions of the potential victims of violence. The exercise of personal violence may itself trigger a chain of grave violence; the Western nations that remained passive in the face of the Rwandan genocide decided to intervene to topple the Gaddafi government of Libya in the name of responsibility to protect (R2P), thereby precipitating vast portions of the Maghreb and Sahel countries into the mire of personal violence. The dichotomous world of centre-periphery is rife with both structural and personal violence, with Africa in the line of fire.

While the original theorem of violence presented by Galtung, in which violence is defined as the difference between the actual and the potential, is powerfully revealing,⁵ we should reflect further upon the notion of African potentials. The precise shape of an imaginary state in which both personal violence and structural violence have been abolished, with the actual matching the potential, remains vague. In such a state, according to popular interpretations of human development, every individual would be able to enjoy longevity, a decent life and a good education with a fair distribution of resources. However, human potentials pertain not only to the socio-economic well-being of individuals but are also closely connected with collective self-determination in the political and cultural spheres; the realisation of national, communal and personal dignity is therefore essential. Given the diversity of value in use, a hypothetical society in which all potentials are realised will be substantially different from

the average shape of a homogeneous ‘global society’. Such hypothetical spaces will be diverse, given that they contain a wide variety of local and regional histories, belief systems and ecological systems (see Chapter 8, for example). This is the reason why we speak of ‘African’ potentials rather than of more abstract human potentials.

However, a blanket notion of Africa can also be problematic, as Africa is extremely diverse not only in terms of eco-systems, cultures, religions and languages but also with respect to economic structures and political systems. In this regard, the unique position of the Southern African region, the main focus of the discussion of this book, should be noted. As we examine below, the conflict regime in Southern Africa is based on the history of foreign control over land and resources, testifying the glaring truth that primitive accumulation of capital is not just a one-off event but a sustained process. At the same time, the economic activities of monopoly capitalism have resulted in a close integration of the entire region, thereby rendering realistic an agenda of the liberation of the whole region. Historically, Southern Africa has been a microcosm of global structural and personal violence, which has been consolidated by the legal and cultural superstructure of Euro-centric racism as well as by the sophisticated military machinery targeting the whole region with the aim of protecting the racial order of apartheid. In the next section, in order to provide a glimpse of the structural diversity of Africa, we briefly describe the characteristics of the historical path of agrarian accumulation in Southern Africa *vis-à-vis* those of the rest of the continent.

1.5. Structural Violence and Accumulation Trajectories in Africa

Patterns of conflict over land and resources in Africa continue to be defined by the agrarian structures that have taken shape through the

history of colonial scramble for Africa in the past centuries. Three macro-scale trajectories of capital accumulation are discernible: first, the labour reserve political economies located primarily in Southern Africa; second, the resource extraction concession enclaves mainly in Central Africa; third, the trade economies grounded in the extraction of surpluses from African peasantries across West and Eastern Africa (Amin 1976; see also Chapter 2). These diverse historical paths created intense but varied patterns of structural violence defined in the previous section throughout the continent.⁶

First, an ‘Africa of the labour reserves’ emerged in settler colonies as a result of land dispossession and the displacement of the peasantry, which conduced to monopolistic control over land and water resources as well as infrastructure investments for the benefit of white settlers. This plainly unequal structure is still manifest in such places as South Africa, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Kenya and Algeria on a large scale, as well as in their neighbours such as Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique on a smaller scale (Denoon 1972; Magubane 1979). This process clearly caused a shift in primary food production from African peasants towards large-scale European farmers who had the support of state marketing boards and European merchants. In addition, beginning in the 1950s, new enclaves of highly subsidised agro-industrial estates expanded in this region. Even though the continuous process of land dispossession seriously undermined the livelihoods of the African peasantry (almost completely in South Africa) and caused ‘land hunger’, this accumulation ‘from above’ fell short of resulting in the total dispossession of peasant lands. Instead, based on a functional dualism that subjugated labour and repressed peasant farming, the process resulted in the creation and preservation of ‘labour reserves’, the home of migrant workers who were exposed to super-exploitation. This settler mode of accumulation placed the burden of social reproduction of cheap labour on the shoulders of the peasantry in segregated ‘communal’ areas, where ‘tribal’ authority

was preserved and recreated by the settler regime to regulate the systems (see Moyo and Yeros eds 2005). This instrumentalisation of traditions makes it imperative for us to discuss the ambiguity of the roles of traditional chiefs in understanding African potentials in Southern African contexts (Chapters 3 and 4).

Second, an ‘Africa of the concessions’ created several significant agricultural enclaves, as well as mining ones, formed around plantations with rudimentary agro-processing facilities typically in Central Africa. This mode of primitive accumulation entailed the plunder of raw materials and involved limited infrastructural investments by trading and mining conglomerates. This mode of accumulation also entailed direct control of resources by transnational capital, rather than the creation of a domestic bourgeoisie based on the indigenous population or European settlers. Such enclaves were sustained only through the merciless use of personal violence in the form of military control and the forcible recruitment of cheap labour. The pedigree of resistance to this enclave dispossession, for instance in Cameroon, is well documented (Crowder 1968). The enclaves were not directly integrated into local economic development, though subsequent to independence, the creation and incorporation of peasantries began to supplement the enclaves, except where large oil and mining enclaves overshadowed national policies.

Third, we have an ‘Africa of the *économie de traite*’ in which seemingly autonomous peasants are forced to produce a quota of specific export products. This practice was developed and sustained during two centuries of European mercantilism, typically in West and East Africa. Although this mode of accumulation was also premised on the rule of ‘traditional’ chiefs buttressed by colonial administration along the line of the ‘indirect rule’ of Lord Lugard, it differs from the first path in that peasants were encouraged to produce more on the land. This type of colonisation led to the

pervasive growth of ‘petty (agricultural) commodity production’ among increasingly differentiated peasantries (Bernstein 2002) or ‘small cultivators’ (Mafeje 2003). Critically, this mode of colonisation also gave rise to institutionalised labour migration based on various extra-economic measures that did not involve forceful land alienation. In West Africa, a vast number of farmers migrated from northern territories into the coastal and forest areas where agricultural commercialisation was focused on tropical crop exports. In the end, this trajectory has been conducive not only to the creation of diverse peasantries but also to intense land conflicts in places like today’s Côte d’Ivoire, where there have been attempts to deprive ‘alien northerners’ of their entitlements. Even within the peasant societies of this third category, large-scale agricultural estates (e.g. for palm oil) emerged from the 1940s and led to the creation of new enclaves as the drive to modernise agriculture grew.

On top of these three patterns of gradual transformation of agro-based African political economy, since the beginning of the 21st century, the prolonged crisis of the world capitalist system has been producing a new wave of accumulation through land dispossession in Africa at large. This has taken place partly through fraudulent land grabbing, as well as, more generally, through the erosion of both rural and urban incomes due to wage repression and price hikes, which brings social reproduction based in the African countryside into crisis (see Moyo, Jha and Yeros 2013). A renewed interest in oil, gas and mineral extraction accompanies the most recent surge in land alienation, expanding the production of food, bio-fuels and natural resources for export at the expense of food sovereignty. The same process intensifies the exploitation of water resources and undermines the livelihoods of peasants and pastoralists.

Under present global neoliberal conditions, small and scattered forms of land concentration began to emerge in the 1990s even in non-settler Africa. This appears to have established a fragile

merchant path of agrarian accumulation allowing non-rural capital to gain access to land. This accumulation path is now being overtaken by a wider process of large-scale land alienation led by both Western and Eastern foreign capital, often with African domestic allies. Although many 'land deals' remain unconfirmed, this uncertainty itself has fuelled political upheaval as occurred in Madagascar. This continental process of land and agrarian transformation is now installing a new 'junker' path of accumulation across Africa, which is transforming sections of the African countryside to perform the function of impoverished labour reserves in parallel with the creation of more agricultural enclaves (ibid.).

This trend implies a gradual convergence of the three macro accumulation trajectories, with agrarian capital and expertise from Southern Africa playing an important role in the scramble for land. The varied and yet converging accumulation trajectories continue to be at the heart of uneven development, exclusion, and poverty in Africa. This process constitutes a key factor of the major conflicts and provokes widespread resistances throughout the continent, including the radicalisation of Zimbabwe since 1997 (Moyo 2008). The ongoing struggle for land in Southern Africa therefore has critical implications for the future of Africa as a whole.

1.6. African Potentials in History

African potentials should be considered in terms of both its spatial and temporal dimensions, reflecting the continent's integration into the space of the world capitalist system, and its continued exposure to forms of severe personal and structural violence that centre around land and agrarian inequalities occasioned by different modes of European colonial penetration. Extending the time horizon a little further back to pre-colonial times enables us to 'rediscover' the continuity of African agency. While going along with

the ‘reinvention’ of traditions thesis, however, we should be careful not to romanticise the African past. Nonetheless, elements of past practices of possible conflict resolution have not died out but persist into today’s Africa, even though such potentials have been constrained by colonial and post-colonial politics.

The pan-African political culture as described by Igor Kopytoff may be relevant here (Kopytoff 1987; Nyamnjoh 2013). According to his account of African history, in pre-colonial land-abundant Africa, societies and polities always generated and regenerated in the space of peripheral frontiers as ‘institutional vacuum’ (Kopytoff 1987, pp. 25-33). In times of serious feuds, witchcraft, famines and wars, some people were pushed out of their home organisation and moved to sparsely populated frontiers, where they grew new settlements. Latecomers joined from different places at different times as evidenced by numerous folk tales of kin groups throughout the continent. Such a multifarious society would then consolidate into a larger polity that might face serious fission again, and the process would restart, rendering the overall shape of African society extremely amorphous. In Africa, there has not been linear development of homogeneous ‘tribes’; rather, the continent has witnessed a continuous rise and decline of heterogeneous societies and polities. Therefore, African ‘traditional’ societies have been characterised largely by mobility, fluidity, flexibility and openness.

These traits of African societies seem to have influenced the modalities of resolving everyday micro conflicts pertaining to the allocation of land and resources, succession struggles, family feuds, homicides and skirmishes with neighbouring societies over livestock and so forth. In such a fluid and flexible society, the boundaries of identities tend to be blurred; a person may maintain dual ethnic identification with both the original community and the present settlement, switch over between them, or create a new identity platform. People often patiently let time pass before an implicit

consensus is reached among diverse members by means of egalitarian, horizontal communication, sometimes called *palaver* (Chapter 10). Innovations brought in by outsiders are experimented selectively before they take root as 'indigenous'. Traditional rituals to heal the wounds of society are constantly reworked to accommodate the needs of the present moment.

As evidenced in the new resettlement areas after the land reform in Zimbabwe, people of diverse backgrounds make use of marriage, burials, totemic ties, chiefs' authority and other traditional and modern tools to redefine the notion of autochthony and create a new sense of belonging (Chapter 3). In the countryside facing land grabbing, the collective will of villagers may prevail and effectively check undemocratic deviation by traditional leaders (Chapter 4).⁷ Although some colonial scholars have marvelled at the sophistication of African contemporary practices and have even attempted to codify them (e.g. Schapera 1938), the modalities of conflict resolution and transformation have always been changeable and of an ad hoc nature in the African peasant world. The experience of South Africa's TRC amply demonstrates the power of undetermined, open ventures aiming to achieve social healing in the land of Africa (Chapter 6).

However, these historically rooted modalities have been neglected, distorted and manipulated by colonial administrators, and furthermore, by the authoritarian rulers of African states after independence. Today, the relative fluidity of frontiers is making African societies vulnerable to larger-scale conflicts. The institutional vacuum in the periphery of existing nation-states sometimes serves as hotbeds of activity by predatory militant groups, or as stages for large-scale land grabbing by global and domestic capital, thereby forcing African peasants to face insecurity over land even more acutely than in the past. On the other hand, cages of 'modern nations' grafted onto African soil are giving rise to hierarchical regimes of

citizenship and belonging, thereby stoking xenophobic violence. Ironically, this is taking place in the regional centres of capital accumulation such as in South Africa, the African champion of 'liberal democracy' (Nyamnjoh 2006; Neocosmos 2006) and in the erstwhile African 'miracle growth' performer, Côte d'Ivoire.

As eloquently described by Frantz Fanon, in the colonial extremity of the dichotomy of absolute good and absolute evil, violence exerted by the colonised would function as a necessary momentum to liberate them, but Fanon also believed that such cleansing violence of the masses needed to be combined with a dedicated leadership that was willing to work among them. While engaging in the Algerian liberation struggle, he clearly foresaw the rule of a neo-colonial 'national bourgeoisie' in independent African states and their hostility to the peasant majority (Fanon 2004). This alienation casts a long shadow over contemporary African politics.

In categorising post-colonial African states, Thandika Mkandawire has forcefully argued that the 'rentier' states that depend on rents from the mining sector have been more prone to violent conflicts than the 'merchant' states that rely on the taxation of peasants. In the former, wealth tends to concentrate in economic enclaves and cities. Extreme forms of rising inequalities, which are becoming all the more visible today, thrust the frustrated urban youth into radical and yet ideologically premature forms of rebellion. Upon being defeated, some of these groups, pushed out of the capital cities, roved and sought support in the countryside, where they encountered indifference and even hostility among local peasants whose worldviews were largely unfamiliar to the young rebels. This is considered a major factor behind the atrocities in the countryside that were committed by the revolutionaries- turned-rogues who desperately tried to 'capture' the peasantry in West and Central Africa in the post-Cold War period (Mkandawire 2008). The possibility of this type of conflict repeating itself is real, given the

convergence of accumulation trajectories with the creation of more enclaves in an ever large number of African countries.

The antagonism between the urban and rural spaces in Africa brings home the importance of learning from the everyday practices of settling disputes and transforming conflicts in the world of the peasantry, as part of a collective endeavour to release historically grounded African potentials. Like growing trees, the modalities of micro practices of conflict resolution in the countryside, which have developed historically in African settings, should be carefully nurtured so that their lessons may be adapted to other communities, including the space of urban dwellers (Chapter 9), through a process of mutual learning. African potentials are to address both personal and structural violence by connecting micro village practices with a broader attempt at structural transformation, with the aim of putting an end to capitalist exploitation and super-exploitation, bringing about the co-existence and flourishing of multifarious communities in Africa.⁸

While retaining a counterfactual dream, this book presents a powerful set of case studies that shed light upon various aspects of people's experience of conflict resolution and transformation on the ground, while avoiding overly hasty generalisations and formalisations of each case. In the final section of this chapter, we give an overview and summary of the core messages of the individual chapters that are clustered into the three parts: Structure and Agency (Part I); National Projections (Part II); and The Power of Conversation (Part III). The reader will find the chapters of this volume unveil multiple contradictions between leadership and bottom-up initiatives, between conservation and renovation, as well as between conviction and uncertainty among the people. The arguments in some chapters are in conflict with those in other chapters, implicitly or explicitly. However, we believe that this volume has achieved powerful unity in diversity in that all authors strived to

answer the same question in different contexts: What are the substantial meanings and implications of African potentials?

1.7. The Structure of this Book

This book puts into clear focus the history, society and political economy of the Southern African region, revealing not only its unique historical characteristics but also its embodiment of the world system as characterised by the centre-periphery relationship. Part I, ‘Structure and Agency’, illuminates the historically entrenched economic and political structures of this region, as well as the popular agency for coping with and surmounting the challenges pertaining to the ongoing process of structural transformation. The key is how to solve the agrarian question. Chapter 2 by Sam Moyo starts with an examination of the evolution of Southern Africa’s conflict regime with attention duly paid to the history of land dispossession and agrarian transformation on the continent. A special focus is placed on the process of radicalisation of Zimbabwe, resulting from the bottom-up land reform, with its dynamics explained in a broader perspective of decolonisation as well as of the complex internal class struggles of Zimbabwe. It is demonstrated that class alliance in the countryside has played an important role, even though its future shape is still unpredictable. Presenting a powerful alternative discourse on Zimbabwean situations, this chapter concludes with a bird’s eye analysis of external relations of Zimbabwe, including the implications of its Look East Policy (LEP).

Chapter 3 by Grasian Mkodzongi recounts the story of the reorganisation of people’s life in a resettlement area created through the Fast Track Land Reform Programme in the 2000s. Contrary to the general perceptions of outsiders, the newly resettled people were far from monolithic. They were diverse in terms of geographic and ethnic backgrounds. Earlier settlers regarded newcomers as ‘witches’,

but people were also very quick to utilise a wide variety of traditional and modern instruments to reunite. Mkodzongi has found that those tools included new kinship ties through marriage, burial in the new soil, the discovery of ancestral connections through totems and the expansion of the influence of chiefs to newly created spaces through communal courts, as well as modern institutional mechanisms, all of which contributed to resolving the conflict related to autochthony and differential belonging and helped to create new social bonds.

Chapter 4 by Shuichi Oyama traces the colonial and post-colonial history of Zambia to show the contemporary patterns of land use in the country, confirming that the introduction of privately titled land has created opportunities for foreign capital and the local elite to acquire more land for commercial use, thereby making Zambian peasants vulnerable to aggressive ‘enclosure’. In the latter half of the chapter, Oyama stages an enthralling masque, depicting the patience, anger and resilience of villagers who face land dispossession, as well as the process in which the greedy deviance of chiefs’ behaviours was corrected. These three chapters demonstrate that seemingly traditional mechanisms are continuously discovered, recreated and utilised by the local agency in the face of structural violence in Southern Africa.

The process of social healing and transformation should not be confined to the local level but should also be examined as a collective, unfinished post-colonial project at the level of nation building. This is the theme of Part II, ‘National Projections’. Sovereign nation-states are still expected to play a crucial role in providing an arena for social transformation (Moyo and Yeros 2011). However, we face a host of problems that include the colonial legacy of divide and rule embedded in the social life and legal and administrative systems, to varying degrees, in Southern African nations as well as in the rest of the continent. As Mahmood Mamdani argues, Nyerere’s leadership in the nation building of Tanzania was largely successful in

establishing a sovereign nation based on political citizenship to sweep out partial and divisive institutions (Mamdani 2012). While the vision of Nyerere as interpreted by Mamdani appears to have an affinity with the Hobbesian dream of giving birth to an absolute authority of a sovereign, the Nigerian political scientist, Peter Ekeh, once advanced a more communitarian alternative of African government in which the primordial, moral public would overwhelm the civic, amoral public (Ekeh 1975). Thus, there are still contested visions of the core principles underlying national government in Africa.

Given its long history of internal migration of diverse African peoples as well as Portuguese, Dutch, British and German colonialism, the Southern African region is now inhabited by a wide variety of peoples of different cultural backgrounds. However, their relative positions and acquired resources are far from equal. In Chapter 5, Yoko Nagahara presents a powerful portrait of the history of Namibia, which, while enjoying relative political stability after independence along with neighbouring Botswana, remains haunted by the legacy of ethno-regional divides. Keeping sight of the broader question of German and South African colonial responsibility, Nagahara vividly describes the conflicting emotions and interests over the issues of land, reparation and gender among contemporary Namibians. The quest of ordinary people to establish and share historical truths must be the foundation of any meaningful national reconciliation of Namibians, and it is suggested that such attempts are being made from below. In the latter half of the chapter, she provides a kaleidoscopic view of connectivity of Namibia's historical experiences with the rest of the world, including East Asia, thereby opening the way to redefine Namibian nation building and African potentials in world history.

The next two chapters in this part of the book deal with South Africa. Following up on the question of national reconciliation as discussed in Chapter 5, Toshihiro Abe sheds fresh light upon the

much-debated role of the TRC in the social transformation of post-apartheid South Africa in Chapter 6. Examining the cases of public hearings, Abe argues that the TRC played a powerful ‘catalytic’ role, one that a formal judicial court system could never play. Given the serious limitation of resources and capacity, it might be unrealistic for most African countries to organise large-scale projects like South Africa’s TRC, which was far from perfect in itself, to investigate the truth related to the past violent conflict. However, the experience of the TRC provides a powerful model that can be adopted and reworked, not as a costly national ritual but as an arena in which face-to-face dialogue between victims and perpetrators may initiate voluntary and unintended processes of remaking individual and group identities.

Chapter 7 by Yoichi Mine describes the history of liberation movements in South Africa, and presents two contrasting agendas: the multi-racial, pluralist approach to seek for co-existence of cultural groups as the first step of thorough social transformation on the one hand, and the pan-African, integrationist approach to break up cultural boundaries and create a new nation as a precondition of any liberatory agenda on the other. Recognising that power-sharing arrangements based on the first approach prevailed in South Africa in 1994, Mine indicates that prolonged power sharing may cause serious social maladies, and yet a federal option seems desirable for a larger political unit.

Part III, ‘The Power of Conversation’, deals with the popular politics that develops from below in parallel with the formal politics that centres on state power. The chapters in this part discuss various aspects of the communicative interfaces among people, confirming the power of horizontal communication and its critical role in emancipatory politics. Chapter 8 by Wilbert Sadomba counters the extremity of methodological individualism of the Western social sciences and presents an alternative way of intellectual engagement

in the African reality. As a ‘participant observer’, Sadomba lucidly recounts an African cosmology from the inside. All mortals die to occupy some spaces in the spirit world, which controls the behaviours of human beings through punishment and reward. The tripartite worlds of spirits, nature and human society exist in symbiosis. People’s conversations with the spirit world and the natural world guide them to do the right thing with regard to other humans and to nature, and this explains a great deal about the inner logic of the land occupation movement in Zimbabwe. Sadomba’s chapter also provides a forceful background for the stories told in Chapters 3 and 4.

Then, Chapter 9 by Mayu Hayakawa shifts the scene to the urban space of Harare, the capital city of Zimbabwe, where ordinary people struggled to get by in the economic turbulence and hyper-inflation that culminated in 2008. Contrary to outsiders’ perceptions that people in Zimbabwean cities were passive victims of authoritarian politics, the daily verbal interactions among residents described here are full of wit and irony, and they have worked out innovative ways of transactions for daily survival, as witnessed by Hayakawa who frequented Harare at the time of the ‘crisis’. We all live in the world of monetary fetishism, but people in Harare, it appears, conducted themselves according to their own moral perceptions of what was right and wrong.

Finally, Chapter 10 by Michael Neocosmos serves as the concluding chapter for the entire book, highlighting the significance of the everyday politics of people through free and horizontal conversation called *palaver*, a powerful tool to address contradictions among the people and restore balance in the community, which must be clearly distinguished from an exclusionary ‘top-down’ state politics that tends to essentialise, technicise and professionalise those practices. Collective practices issued from the *palaver* can be found not only among the Bakongo in Central Africa, but also in the Shir

(when it existed) in Somalia, the *Gaçaça* in Rwanda and the Judiya in Darfur in Sudan. Some of these practices also inform the shack-dwellers' movement of Abahlali baseMjondolo in South Africa. However in some of these cases, procedures are not as democratic as in others because some are subject to state control. According to Neocosmos, these practices do not so much provide a technique that can be potentially applied in state politics but they amount to 'the deployment in *actuality* of ancient methods adapted to current needs'. In other words they enable the potentiality within African culture of a practice or practices that transcend modes of politics imported from the West.

African people will not find an image of their future in the countries of the North. Fundamental transformation is inevitable. However, when one fights with full might against an enemy, one's face may gradually look like that of the enemy. Urban intellectuals and activists should spend more time with the people they work for, delving into their wisdom of handling contradictions among themselves. Amílcar Cabral urged middle-class intellectuals to commit 'class suicide' and 'return to the source' (Cabral 1972; Chapter 7). This cannot be attained merely by one-off volition of individuals but must involve a protracted process full of trials and errors. We hope this book serves as the beginning for such a heuristic, collective process.

Notes

¹ The project was funded by Japan Society for Promotion of Science (JSPS) and is formally entitled 'Comprehensive Area Studies on Coexistence and Conflict Resolution Utilizing African Potentials'.

<http://www.africapotential.africa.kyoto-u.ac.jp/en/> (last accessed 20 October 2015). In a meeting on this research project, a Zimbabwean participant, Dr. Wilbert Sadomba, suggested that African members were eager to know about 'Asian or Japanese potentials'. By way of reply, some contributors mention Japanese and Asian experiences in a comparative light (especially Chapters 5 and 7).

² The life strategies of people in Harare under the economic crisis of Zimbabwe are vividly described in Chapter 9 of this volume. As for the lack of so-called 'social cohesion' in today's South Africa, see Chapters 6 and 10.

³ For a summary of previous debates on neopatrimonialism and an attempt to locate this framework in non-African as well as African contexts, see Bach and Gazibo (eds) (2012). For a discussion of the arbitrariness of this approach, see Mkandawire (2013).

⁴ Galtung later introduced a third form of violence, *cultural violence*, which refers to aspects of a culture that legitimise personal and structural violence (Galtung 1990).

⁵ The reference to the theory of Galtung in this chapter does not presuppose that the contributors of this volume have embraced his notion of forms of violence and peace. Rather, it is meant to emphasise the violent nature of structural injustice and to elaborate the distinction between the potential and the actual. Neocosmos explicitly uses the term 'politics of peace' to describe the art of resolving contradictions among the people (Chapter 10; see also Chapter 7).

⁶ There are other trajectories in Africa. Notable are cases where semi-feudal structures had been established (e.g. in Ethiopia) and where an external land tenancy regime had been set up under colonial rule (e.g. in Buganda). Land reforms in Ethiopia redistributed ownership in the 1970s and thereafter while, more recently, Ethiopia has reportedly become a centre of extensive foreign land acquisition. Various land reforms have been under way in Uganda as well.

⁷ As indicated in Chapters 4, 5 and 8, the predicaments of women are frequent factors in popular defiance against injustice as well as in the quest

for conflict resolution.

⁸ In his 1881 letter to Vera Sassoulitch, a Russian Narodnik, Karl Marx clarified his position and emphasised the potentials of Russian rural community as ‘the mainspring of Russia’s social regeneration’. If deleterious influences from outside are eliminated, ‘spontaneous development’ of future Russia may be ensured (Marx 1977, p. 624). Marx passed away two years after he elaborated this succinct memorandum. In order to envision Africa’s social regeneration, non-dogmatic thinking along this line is required.

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Southern African Potentials to Address Land-based Conflict¹

Sam Moyo

2.1. Introduction: Conflict Management Perspectives

The Southern African region faces a peculiar conflict regime rooted in the complex interplay of internal and external dynamics of settler-colonial dispossession, uneven capitalist development and the inadequate redress of past injustices. In particular, settler-colonial capitalist penetration had the specific effects of socially and structurally dislocating society and creating a unique legacy of inequality. The reconfiguration of the region's trade and investment patterns under neoliberal policy conditions, without redressing racial disharmony and inequality, proscribes the democratisation of state practices, while fuelling persistent struggles against racial and foreign monopoly control over land, minerals, water and other natural resources.

Although political subjectivities and hegemonic discursive forces often frame understandings of the nature and scale of contemporary 'conflicts' in Southern Africa, historically derived objective patterns of land and resource control, as well as the resultant socio-economic inequalities, objectively structure societal relations and entrench (subjective) ideologies and perceptions about the character of the conflict, and how to resolve the legacy of dispossession, displacement and exclusion. Notwithstanding the hegemonic economic and cultural theories, and discourses which presume the centrality of

Western civilisation in the region's development trajectory, the persistence of unequal racial and foreign control over land and resources in Southern Africa has provoked the resurgence of radical social and political movements.

Dominant discourses on the nature of the region's conflicts and their reconciliation model tend to reproduce Euro-centric conceptual frameworks on the trajectory of African development and politics, as well as the nature of conflicts that prevail. Much of the debate highlights the violent manifestations of the conflicts and attributes this to nebulous notions of ethnic and religious difference, which is putatively peculiar to the African phenotype of state–societal relations. The ubiquitous organising concept of 'neopatrimonialism' is frequently used without empirical substantiation to conceptualise an African mode of 'governance' largely by reducing all social relations to localised and ethnicised categories of domination and resistance (Moyo and Chambati 2013; Moyo and Yeros 2013).

The evolution of racial and class-based transformations of societal inequalities over the last few centuries, and the trajectory of disarticulated accumulation and development which entrenches exclusion, are often occluded in such analyses of conflict in settler Africa. This discourse thus tends to be disconnected from local and national struggles over land and resources and ignores the multi-layered politics which frame conflict within the context of 'globalisation'. Indeed, external forces are absolved from the historical and current scramble for Southern African resources, while occluding the structural power of monopoly-finance capital in shaping growing inequalities, dispossession and displacement, and immiserisation, at a time when the crisis of capitalism and ecology deepens. Obfuscating these external roots of African conflicts reproduces new political subjectivities, which reduce the problem to one of the 're-colonisation of Africa' by China, without reference to

the hierarchy of international power relations dominated by the North Atlantic alliance.

Externally driven solutions to reconciliation and conflict resolution on the continent tend to rely on limited legalistic forms of justice (Mamdani 2011) which purport positive concern with promoting good governance and human rights. When internal solutions or African approaches are called upon to address conflict, the tendency is to focus on narrow culturalist frameworks of local mediation, to the neglect of addressing structural inequalities and global forces which underlie such conflicts. In this framework, Africa is treated as a passive (if not ignorant) victim of recolonisation, while ongoing local and national resistances to external intervention are ignored. Yet the changing tactics of Western intervention in Africa, through the increased use of soft power and imposition of neoliberal economic policies, enables the ongoing land and resource grabs.

Understanding the wider political economy of Southern Africa's conflict regime, and the limitations of the conflict resolution approaches used to address the legacy of racial oppression, structural inequality and social exclusion, is critical in any effort intended to explore the nature of African potentials to manage conflict. The extent to which delayed decolonisation deepened the radicalisation of national liberation movements and political parties on the region and fuels radical demands for land reform in response to race and class inequalities, and the socio-political contradictions that such radical reforms evoke, need to be carefully examined. How external interventions exacerbate the region's conflict regime, and provokes the search for autonomous external relations also requires closer examination. Southern African potentials to resolve land-based conflicts and create long-lasting peace may well be better informed by a more rigorous assessment of the recent approach to resolving the Zimbabwe conflict. Even if this experience does not necessarily represent the 'ideal' model of resolving settler-African conflicts, it

poses an alternative, and is indicative of the complexities of addressing conflict through radical redistributive reform in contemporary time. This experience highlights low structural changes seeking to accommodate varied indigenous social forces, enhance equality and assuage popular grievances, while creating new social contradictions, and struggles over addressing the grievances of former landowners.

2.2. Understanding the Southern African Conflict Regime

Conflicts over land and related resources in Southern Africa reflect specific social relations of production and reproduction and a mode of economic rule, which outlived decolonisation until the current mode of neoliberal rule. Superficial culturalist understandings of Southern African exceptionalism do not account for the persistence of race-based conflicts over land and natural resource control. Common objective and subjective experiences of settler-colonial rule, orchestrated through the South African state and transnational capital, shaped a regional system of accumulation and resistances which evolved within the wider geo-strategic context of imperialism during the Cold War.

More generally, conflict over land and resources in Africa continues to be defined by the exploitative agrarian structures established by the colonial scramble for Africa during the expansion of the world capitalist system around the turn of the 18th century. Three macroscale trajectories of accumulation have defined the penetration of capital since colonial rule, leading to a disarticulated agrarian transition to capitalism. These trajectories which are often combined in varied degrees are: the labour reserve political economies of Southern Africa; the resource extraction concession enclaves of Central Africa; and the trade economies grounded in the

extraction of surpluses from peasantries cutting across West and East Africa (Amin 1972).

Accumulation ‘from above’ through land dispossession and displacement of the peasantry, through economic and extra-economic coercion of labour in former settler-colonial states, epitomised the first wave of land alienation and concentration in Africa during the 18th century (Arrighi 1973). This also led to monopolistic control over national water resources and public infrastructural investments for the benefit of white settlers and large-scale commercial farms. In South Africa, Rhodesia and Namibia, ‘large-scale commercial farming’ (LSCF) systems based on private property rights were spatially segregated from the communal areas. The super-exploitation of compelled migrant labour destroyed the peasant economies (Magubane 1979). From the 1950s, this accumulation trajectory was augmented through the creation of enclaves of agro-industrial estates heavily subsidised by the state in the settler-colonial (Moyo 2013) and some neighbouring territories (e.g. Malawi) on a smaller scale, where migrant labour was institutionalised (Mhone 1992).

In ‘non-settler’ Southern Africa, (e.g. Malawi, Tanzania, etc.) indirect colonial rule (Mamdani 1996) led to the creation of a few significant enclaves formed around agricultural plantations with rudimentary agro-processing facilities, as well as mining. This mode of accumulation entailed the direct control of the resources by transnational capital rather than the creation of a domestic European bourgeoisie. The indigenous population was forced into institutionalised supply of migrant labour to the settler economies. In time, the creation and incorporation of peasantries supplemented the enclaves, except where large-scale mining enclaves became dominant (e.g. Angola, Zambia, etc.). European mercantilism promoted ‘petty (agricultural) commodity production’ among increasingly differentiated ‘small cultivators’ (Mafeje 2003) by channelling

produce through state marketing boards. From the 1970s until the 1990s efforts to promote capitalist farming led to a shallow process of land concentration in non-settler Southern Africa, with land ownership inequities reflecting wider class and ethno-regional cleavages, while land ‘scarcity’ squeezed increasing numbers of small farmers into marginal lands (Moyo 2008).

Structural change in Southern Africa did not however lead to the complete dispossession of all peasant lands, although this was almost the case in South Africa. Yet dispossession undermined the peasantry throughout the region and created a regional labour reserve economy based on a functional dualism that subjugated migrant labour, and built discriminatory commodity markets against peasants. Consequently, the production of food shifted away from the peasantry, while commodity production was dominated by large-scale farmers with the support of state marketing boards and European merchants.

This settler mode of accumulation, including its fiscal structures and social security systems, was racially discriminatory, undemocratic and repressive (Mkandawire 2012), and placed the burden of social reproduction on the peasantry. Customary authority regulated this accumulation regime socially and politically within the ‘native reserves’, recreating subordinated patriarchies in the so-called ‘communal areas’. These structural and social changes undermined African values, communities and social relations of production and reproduction.

A protracted history of political independence struggle and armed liberation wars against the militarised settler states was a key outcome of the delayed decolonisation of the region. Eventually, an externally mediated elite compromise intended to ‘resolve the conflict’ through political reconciliation was brokered. This deal sought the transfer and sharing of political power, including control of the government bureaucracy, while relying on market mechanisms

to effect social redistribution and transformation. This conciliation approach placed economistic and market-led land reform and rural development programmes, based on limited fiscal allocations and complemented by micro welfarist projects, at the centre of conflict management. A peaceful political transition emerged, but for less than two decades.

Consequently, Southern Africa's major source of conflicts remains focused on the basic social questions and political challenges of exclusion and inequalities derived from the control of resources (e.g. water, woodlands and minerals). Landlessness underlies poverty and fuels high-profile struggles. Demands for popular sovereignty over land and various national resources (locally and nationally) place the political dimension of the agrarian question at the centre of conflicts.

Since the fall of apartheid, the economic geography of Southern Africa is even more rapidly evolving through a trajectory of accumulation by dispossession, reinforcing unequal structures established through colonial capitalist rule. The present scramble for Southern African resources in alliance with black petty bourgeoisie has become a critical source of grievance. However, this process is conceived as the mere machinations of a single category of nebulously defined corrupt and greedy African 'elites' who give away the land for nothing (see Wily 2012). Indeed, such land and resource conflicts are inherently explosive, especially where the inequalities fuse class with race, nationality and ethnic and other identity differences (Moyo and Yeros 2005a), and potent where gender inequities are repressed within the prevalent patriarchal order sustained by aspects of customary authority. The systemic impacts of the crisis of neoliberalism are however more critical in shaping the rise of resource speculation on a global scale.

In this regard, transition to capitalism since colonial times has not resolved the agrarian question in societies where over 70 per cent of

the population are rooted in the land and agriculture. This failed promise of *development* has limited the realisation of a peace dividend since 1980. Yet, growing environmental stress, productivity deficits and unequal resource allocations lead to a social crisis and related conflicts which place land restitution at the centre of peace making. The persistence of extroverted production and the resource allocation system, exacerbated by unequal world market relations, reinforces continued food insecurity and food import dependence. Thus, objective ‘under-development’ defines the subjectivities which shape popular grievances and most conflicts in the region.

The prolonged crisis of the world capitalist system since 2001 generated a new wave of accumulation by dispossession based on a large-scale land and natural resource grabbing, while eroding incomes through wage repression and price hikes. Under neoliberal conditions, the pattern of land concentration is increasingly attracting a domestic or indigenous bourgeoisie throughout the Southern Africa region. A fragile merchant path of agrarian accumulation, which comprises non-rural capital (including merchant capital, petty bourgeois elements, bureaucrats, military personnel and professionals), is slowly gaining access to land. They farm on a smaller scale than capitalist farms but are integrated into export markets and global agro-industry. This trajectory continues to promote uneven development and exclusion, and generates conflicts across formal geographic, linguistic and cultural boundaries. Unequal land-labour relations and exploitative agrarian market relations intensified during the 1990s and have deepened the crisis of social reproduction.

These global and national dynamics have provoked widespread resistances throughout the subcontinent (Moyo 2008), evoking a radicalisation process which entails innovative ways of confronting universal social and political challenges (Moyo and Yeros 2013). The radicalisation of Zimbabwe’s land reform and indigenisation

programme at the turn of the century is one of the important examples of resistance. In South Africa, violent protests against capital and poor state 'service' delivery have been on the rise, leading to increased police repression, while a new brand of nationalist 'economic freedom fighters' is taking some root.

2.3. Compromised Decolonisation and the Narrow Peace-making Frameworks

Persistent land-based conflicts in Southern Africa can be traced to the shortcomings of the externally brokered political settlements arranged for the region from 1980. A fundamental factor which has largely shaped the region's conflict regime is the collateral effects of delayed decolonisation and attainment of majority rule in its core settler states. A reconciliation pact was initiated in Zimbabwe in 1979, 20 years after the decolonisation of the rest of Africa in the 1960s, following the decolonisation of the Lusophone territories through militarised takeover in 1974. Negotiated political transitions were realised later in Namibia (1990) and in South Africa (1994). The region experienced an integrated 30-year regional conflict, involving the armed destabilisation of the region by the apartheid regime of South Africa (Moyo and Yeros 2013). This prolonged conflict period, including the proxy civic wars in Mozambique and Angola, and destabilisation of the various Southern African states, broadened the militarisation of society and ruling political parties.

Destabilisation was used by imperialism as a lever of negotiation, until the region as a whole succumbed to a generalised peace and reconciliation pact in the 1990s. This deal offered independence, and majority rule, in return for property guarantees, as well as an opening up to monopoly and finance capital through structural adjustment programmes. Unlike in the rest of Africa, decolonisation and neoliberalism in Southern Africa coincided with decolonisation being

conditional on accepting the neoliberal order. However, the Zimbabwe pact was unstable from the beginning and this shaped its persistent conflict regime, despite the earlier euphoria over the peace deal.

Zimbabwe had been promoted as a model of political transition for the settler societies of Southern Africa. Its significant liberation military gains were traded off for majority rule, based on limited reformism, to avoid the revolutionary approach attempted for instance in Mozambique. The purpose was to create stability and accommodate white settler interests, unlike their ousting in the Lusophone territories. It was promised that non-discriminatory market policies and aid, including external support for the acquisition of land for its redistribution, would accelerate progressive social change. Indeed, Zimbabwe was lauded for enhancing food production, despite the prevalence of food insecurity among 30 per cent of its population. The country became a pilot project for market-led land reform which was considered worth exporting to Namibia and South Africa.

This reconciliation pact did not accommodate the fears and interests of all the liberation movement actors. While Zimbabwe's pact included the nationalist movement led by the Patriotic Front parties, the Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and the Patriotic Front - Zimbabwe African People's Union (PF-ZAPU), some of them viewed the pact as a strategic objective, and thus sought piecemeal reforms which could eventually lead to the growth of a black middle class (Moyo and Yeros 2013). Many others in the movement saw the pact as a tactical move, seeking to consolidate political power and to prepare for a later phase of the struggle for economic empowerment. For the West, the pact was a tactical retreat in this cold war zone. Its immediate aim was to cut losses, as the South African economy was being squeezed by the conflict and sanctions. The West used economic statecraft to

maintain its political control and influence over the non-settler, independent states of the subregion. This contestation of the Lancaster House compromise in 1979 was never fully resolved, as also expressed through the destabilisation of Zimbabwe and the region. This deepened the militarisation of Southern Africa.

As the neoliberal policies took root in the 1990s, Zimbabwe's model was unravelling. Polarising internal class and racial differentiation, and the rise of an assertive black petty bourgeoisie against dominant white capital, alongside the escalation of wage repression and a social crisis induced by structural adjustment policies, widened the fissures. The root of the conflict lay in the weaknesses of this conflict resolution model based upon a superficial reconciliation pact.

During the closing years of the Cold War, domestic political forces in the entire Southern African region were co-opted into accepting a peace pact that promised peace in Mozambique, and political settlement in Namibia and South Africa. The adoption of structural adjustment by Zimbabwe in 1990 reflected the compromise around an alternative neoliberal ideology now in ascendance. Thereafter, the generalisation of the pact and neoliberalism to the region raised false hopes for a peace and development dividend in all of the countries.

Given that in Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Namibia liberation was realised through armed struggle, the security apparatus of the new state was rapidly taken over by guerrilla commanders, unlike experience elsewhere in Africa. While most branches of the state were 'Africanised' early on, control over the security apparatus in Zimbabwe became a political resource over which contending liberation movements struggled. Since there were diverse elements among the security forces with varying inclinations *vis-à-vis* the independence 'pact', the parties differed over the military apparatus, the electoral dispensation and South African destabilisation. The

balance of political power remained fragile during the 1980s. This political dynamic degenerated into fratricidal conflict in Matabeleland from 1983–7.

In effect, petty accumulation impulses, instead of challenging racial inequalities, defending against de-stabilisation and challenging imperialism, were channelled into a violent ‘ethnic’ competition over exclusive control of the state apparatus. After Zimbabwe’s Unity Accord between the liberation parties in 1987, as the neoliberal dream grew from 1991, the petty bourgeoisie were coalescing, through an intra-class mobilisation for ‘indigenisation’, against white and foreign capital.

The roots of the subsequent radicalisation in Zimbabwe after its neoliberal turn in the 1990s reflect the limited character of the decolonisation pact. Despite the phasing out of white political privileges, Zimbabwe remained a racially divided society, in which the defence of ‘human rights’ served mainly to protect white property and race-based privilege. Neocolonialism in Zimbabwe not only relegated the majority population to a permanent process of semi-proletarianisation and super-exploitation, but also excluded the possibility of the emergence of a black middle class with roots of its own in the economy (Moyo and Yeros 2005). The structural violence inherent in this ‘post-white settler’ type of neo-colonialism (Mandaza 1985) was never pacified by piecemeal reforms. A few years after the country entered structural adjustment, even the visible social gains of the prior decade were being reversed.

Elsewhere in Southern Africa (e.g. Zambia, Tanzania, Mozambique, etc.) the agrarian transition was floundering putatively because of the inefficiencies of state interventions. Trade protectionism, state marketing regulations and state participation in the economy through commodity boards and state farming were seen as inefficient and distortive of prices (see Mkandawire and Saludo 1999). Structural adjustment was widely imposed across Southern

Africa, and the states stopped subsidising agriculture and social welfare. State-owned enterprises were quickly privatised in Zambia and Tanzania from the 1990s.

Land tenure relations in Africa were being commodified in some countries allegedly because the lack of tradable property rights had become a barrier to agricultural investment and technological innovation. By the late 1990s, many Southern African countries had reformed National Land Policies with similar legal and administrative provisions to enhance land concessioning (UNECA 2004). Initial land-grabbing experiments occurred from 1996 (e.g. in Mozambique, Zambia, Congo). This laid the legal and political basis for the current wave of large-scale land alienation and land concentration (Moyo 2013).

The political transition pact in Southern Africa had thus not resolved the fundamental roots of the settler-colonial conflict regime, while the neoliberal regime exacerbated the situation. The accumulation needs of the petty bourgeoisie throughout Southern Africa could not be realised as the neoliberal conditions created obstacles to accumulation, while heightening social differentiation and the deteriorating social conditions (Moyo and Yeros 2013). In many of the states, multi-party political reforms further entrenched neoliberal policies alongside new forms of authoritarian rule. From the 1990s, fire sales of state assets to domestic and foreign capital grew. Around 2003 onwards, higher world commodity prices fuelled faster growth in a number of these countries, but these benefits excluded the poor majorities. Therefore, although the peace pacts had cooled down some of the inherited conflicts, they offered limited potentials to resolve them.

By 1996, the petty bourgeoisie in Zimbabwe sought a popular interclass black alliance against the position dominated by settler interests and foreign capital (Moyo and Yeros 2005b). The process was also fuelled by a political unravelling contingent on the

deepening social crisis and the greater labour militancy it generated. Scattered ‘illegal’ land occupations, built upon historic land movements, were also on the rise. However, the sudden emergence of a political opposition backed by white farmers, capital, NGOs and Western states escalated the polarisation of politics, refocusing the conflict around land, elections and sovereignty.

2.4. Zimbabwe’s Radicalisation and its Potentials for Conflict Management

Zimbabwe proposed new ways of deepening the transition to majority rule through radical land reform from 1997, and an indigenisation and empowerment programme from 2007. Radicalisation entailed confrontation by an array of social forces (classes) with settler-colonial power structures, capital and Western states in a process which escalated through the contradictions of a contemporary ‘revolutionary situation’. This involved an internal reconfiguration of political alliances and the introduction of Anglo-European sanctions. This mode of resolving the conflict itself also generated new forms of conflict, driven by both domestic forces and wider international interests.

The mobilisation of a national land movement was based on a multi-class, decentralised and anti-bureaucratic formation, united by radical nationalism, led by war veterans (Moyo and Yeros 2013). It involved the articulation of grievances across the rural–urban divide, while co-opting a significant section of the petty bourgeoisie. The land movement was initiated by popular rural and urban mobilisation against the immediate policy of the ruling party and the state. Indeed, the nationalist leadership had dragged its feet on land reform until 1997, and only stepped in when it risked losing its most critical social bases (the peasantry and the war veterans), given also that war veterans permeate the security forces of the state apparatus. The

purpose of the ruling government elite was to control and co-opt the land movement, as well as to open political space for the expression of pent-up land demands among layers of the population, some of which were not directly organised by war veterans. The popular mobilisation in support of and against the state was however backed by deeper authoritarian practices and extraneous security measures taken against perceived agents of regime change.

The vanguard role played by the land movement in radicalising the state (Moyo and Yeros, 2005b) is now generally acknowledged (see Hanlon et al. 2013), although this role tends to be seen as a mere component, together with the political opposition, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), of a broader ‘passive revolution’ that has ‘remained largely under the control of the state’, while largely politically marginalising the majority of the population (Raftopoulos 2010, p. 707). Some even claim that ‘pro-democracy’ alliances were the vanguard of ‘progressive’ politics in Zimbabwe and the reason why the ruling party opted for radical land reform (Raftopoulos 2009), as if there were no real political or historical basis for such a reform. This interpretation obscures the distinctive features of a rare mass mobilisation which confronted the white agrarian monopoly and the imperialist alliance as a whole, to the effect of liquidating the settler element and broadening the social base of the economy.

The relationship of the land movement to the nationalist leadership poses difficulties of interpretation, since the ruling party had succumbed to neoliberalism, and only changed course from 1997 towards a process of radicalisation, while streamlining and controlling the land movement. Using ‘neopatrimonialism’ as their main conceptual framework, in which the only relationship that exists in society is between rapacious black capitalists and their ethnicised client networks to the exclusion of underlying class dynamics, most analyses of the conflicts and struggles that ensued failed to make sense of it and only saw a ‘destructive party accumulation project’

(Raftopoulos 2010, p. 706). Yet the process of radicalisation integrated diverse class interests, including the black petty bourgeoisie and the semi-proletariat, against white agrarian capital.

Others have argued that black capital never really broke ranks with monopoly capital and that the ZANU-PF leadership acted solely on behalf of capital by controlling the land movement (Masuko 2012; Sadomba 2013). Actually, the state broke ranks with monopoly capital by redistributing many more properties than those that were occupied by the land movement, and redistribution continued beyond the 2000–2002 election contests. The ‘radicalised state’ underwent a peculiar transformation, entailing a suspension of its bureaucratic coherence, as its personnel was mobilised in the interest of Fast Track Land Reform (Moyo and Yeros 2007a, 2011). The constitution of Land Committees overrode local bureaucratic structures,² while the state established *fast-track* procedures and new capacities for the expropriation and redistribution of land. This also entailed reforming laws and amending the constitution to underpin the action and defend land occupiers against eviction. While the radicalisation did not result in a socialist revolution, it was not a generic ‘passive revolution’, for the white agrarian establishment was essentially liquidated both economically and politically.

From a left perspective, one may rightly fault the ruling party for streamlining the land movement and creating space for the petty bourgeoisie. Empirically, however, it did not fulfil a reactionary role, as it did not defend the *status quo ante*. Contrary formulations do not adequately recognise the existence of *real* intra-class conflict, between petty bourgeois and monopoly capital, black and white elites, and among black elites. The petty bourgeoisie itself was radicalised mainly by the land movement, but also by the aggressive external ‘regime change’ interventions. That the petty bourgeoisie also became an agent of change presents difficult political questions, as previous African debates show (Fanon 1967; Cabral 1978; Shivji 1976).

Certainly, it did so largely on its own terms. Moreover, there is a problem in attributing the radicalisation solely to certain local-level war veterans against all the rest that vied for land. Instead of one ‘genuine’ land movement there were different strands of radicalisation, with their own *class* project.

Those who opposed the petty bourgeoisie outright have taken recourse to racialised discourses of ‘corruption’, ‘patrimonialism’ and ‘orchestration’. They vilify the whole land movement on the basis of the attendant use of force and the unfair advantages that some political elites sought (Johnson 2009). Others claim to stand aloof from the difficult political questions, but deploy a liberal-populist ‘people *versus* state’ dichotomy, rendering the whole land reform process solely a consequence of the agency of the landless against an indifferent state at best, or a ‘commandist’ and ‘clientelist’ state, at worst (see for instance Scoones et al. 2010; Hanlon et al. 2013).

Class analyses that reach similar conclusions only do so by downplaying the fact that the petty bourgeoisie broke ranks with monopoly capital (e.g. Sadomba 2013, as discussed in Moyo and Yeros 2013). The nationalist leadership in recent years had come to represent mainly *un-accommodated* bourgeois interests, with their own liberation convictions and under the illusion that they can reform monopoly capitalism so as to sustain a ‘patriotic bourgeoisie’. This underlies the current individualistic pressures for ‘indigenisation’ programmes in strategic industries, as opposed to more collectivist solutions (Moyo and Yeros 2011; Moyo 2011b). This also explains some of the violence that accompanied land reform (mainly off the farms). The nationalist leadership was unable to commit ‘class suicide’ and submit itself to the evolving and expanding popular demands on the ground (Moyo and Yeros 2009, 2011). The strategy of indigenising corporate agro-estates and other industries and the recurrent violence are manifestations not only of class conflict, but also of *intra*-class conflict between petty bourgeois interests and

monopoly capital. Similarly, the organisational weaknesses of the war veteran movement, which became ‘tactically sterile’ in light of the state’s assault on informal urban settlements in 2005 (Sadomba 2013), reflect its failure to undergo organisational and ideological innovation through wider proletarian mobilisation.

Ethno-regional tendencies among the black petty bourgeoisie also undermined the radical nationalist economic posture, as aspiring capitalists lacking other means to bid for land mobilised sub-national identity claims to land ‘rights’ to exclude non-local competitors (Moyo 2011a). This tendency could escalate as land bidding is refocused on the enlargement of existing landholdings at the expense of smallholders. These are essentially the ongoing tendencies of a class which remains profoundly insecure. Should the main ‘enemy’ come to be seen once again as ‘internal’ (or ‘ethno-regional’), there could certainly be regression to a neocolonial type of politics, which is ultimately more malleable to foreign interests (see Moyo and Yeros 2007b). Yet, this is not a foregone conclusion about the character of African politics as it reflects shifting strategies of accumulation, subject to pressures from above and below.

The regrouping of popular forces is all the more necessary given that the new tendencies of class formation at the top and the reinsertion of monopoly finance capital evoke new contradictions and forms of conflict. Struggles over access to land and tenure, labour and farm production, as well as over social services in general, require organised social forces capable of tilting the balance towards smallholders and farm workers. Indeed, 40 per cent of the new small producers belong to new local cooperative movements to pool labour, savings and infrastructure, procure seeds and fertilisers, channel extension services and bid for producer prices (Murisa 2013), or to negotiate labour contracts and access to land (Chambati 2013). Some of these groups are orchestrated by state extension agents and private contract farming firms, while others are led by the war veteran

groups (Moyo 2011c). Yet others draw on kinship relations and existing former farming associations in the communal areas (see Murisa 2013). These local cooperation structures also reflect the absence of a national agricultural labour organisation and former unions in favour of agrarian reform.

This plethora of associations is certainly the kernel of future progressive politics in the countryside, but their new issue-focus on service provision by the state (agricultural inputs, social infrastructure, markets, credit, and subsidies) is far from articulating a new, radical mass movement. Rural cooperativism also has the potential to transform gender relations and customary authority, to defend land rights and progressive agrarian change, as these were the social and political pillars of super-exploitation, particularly of women (Moyo and Yeros 2013). While the Fast Track Land Reform Programme tripled the proportion of rural women holding land in their own right, women remain underrepresented (with below 20 per cent of all farm units). The land movement had also opened political space for women. Yet they seldom hold leadership positions in land committees and local farmer associations (see Murisa 2013).

Whereas the state had involved customary authorities in the land reform's resettlement areas, as a co-optation tactic (e.g. through providing access to land and inputs, etc.) and to create a low-cost dispute-resolution mechanism, the state has excluded chiefs from exercising authority over redistributed land, maintaining their subordination (in some power relations) to elected authorities in local government. Meanwhile, their co-optation into a new class position has the potential to undermine the trajectory of this ethno-regional institution. Furthermore, the beneficiaries from non-contiguous areas have not always embraced their new chiefs (*ibid.*). Finally, the state has also been active in supporting farmers' groups via agricultural extension officers, contrary to suggestions that new farmers have not received state support (Scoones et al. 2010; Cliffe

et al. 2011), or that they have been re-tribalised (Worby 2003). This further accentuates class dynamics rather than identity politics. On the other hand, the liberal ‘pro-democracy’ movement, comprising the donor-funded MDC, NGOs and settler elements, continues to have no interest in the radical potential of such rural associations. Instead they focus on demands for a market-led agrarian and tenure reform agenda.

2.5. Structural Reform: Accumulation from Below and Above?

The Zimbabwe experience has entailed experimentation with a new economic structure with a diversified set of external economic relationships and a new foreign policy stance, given that while land reform radically restructured landownership, it did not ‘oust capital’, which itself is now regrouping (Moyo 2011b). State agrarian policy has led to the deliberate design and institution of competing trajectories of accumulation through a new tri-modal agrarian structure. This consists of peasant, small-scale capitalist and large-scale estate farms, based on differential landownership regimes in terms of land sizes and tenure (e.g. usufruct, permits, leases and freehold or state property). This in turn gives rise to different types of social relations of production, with varied producers vying for different types of labour mobilisation and forms of accumulation (Moyo 2011b, 2011c).

This tri-modal agrarian structure and accumulation framework accommodates the interests of the aspiring black bourgeoisie, while providing for peasant and small-scale capitalist farming, and sparing from redistribution certain farms owned by foreign capital, the state and public trusts. Ostensibly the aim is to maintain critical food supplies and agro-industrial capacity, while promising to indigenise the foreign capital. This approach has been framed within new discourses on developmentalism, resource nationalism and

indigenisation, and empowerment. State dirigisme was deployed and popular cooperativism mobilised in defence of reform, while managing the extensive intra-class struggles within and outside the ruling party, within white and black petty bourgeoisie blocs, and co-opting some sections of capital into the new agrarian structures.

Zimbabwe unravelled the settler-dominated 'labour reserve' economy of the past by amplifying the existing peasantry and incorporating a significant agrarian 'merchant' path, while retaining elements (albeit downsized) of the 'junker' and 'state' paths (see Moyo and Yeros 2005a).³ Re-peasantisation and the break-up of the settler agrarian monopoly has diminished and undermined the functioning of the colonial cheap labour system by absorbing surplus labour into petty-commodity production for own consumption and for the domestic market. Land reforms also pried open access to natural resources and use values that were previously enclosed in the properties monopolised by white farmers (see Chambati 2011).

The immediate manifestation of this is a shortage of labour, especially among the small-scale capitalist sector, as the prior workforce is less willing to work for wages below the cost of social reproduction.

Previously, the large-scale commercial farming (LSCF) sector owed much of its productivity to its reliance on the super-exploitation of semi-proletarianised labour. About 50 per cent of this consisted of non-permanent, casual labour, which reproduced itself precariously between the LSCF and the communal areas, and faced real wage declines during the structural adjustment era. Super-exploitation was facilitated by a racialised, quasi-feudal labour-tenancy system, together with a patriarchal system of customary authority, which undermined the bargaining power of the semi-proletariat as a whole.

That the labour reserve diminished and the bargaining power of labour altered does not, of course, mean that the labour reserve

economy has been extinguished. The persistence of simple reproduction among smallholders and the reconstitution of the small- and large-scale capitalist sectors, under the weight of Western sanctions, continue to re-create the structural conditions of super-exploitation, even among the new self-exploited peasantry. Super-exploitation is further abetted by residual labour tenancy on some of the new farms, as well as intra-family and gender-based labour relations. Yet, the unravelling of racialised relations of personal dependence and the expansion of the smallholder sector has altered the balance of power among the three modes of farming.

New forms of agrarian conflict and political struggle are now being fought over both small- and large-scale capitalist farmers' structural interests in policy measures that oblige small producers to work for wages below the cost of social reproduction. This conflict is reinforced by an emerging export-oriented accumulation strategy. But given that many small-scale capitalist farmers have significant resource vulnerabilities, they may be co-opted by the state into production for domestic markets and industries. In fact, this objective has largely been their principal orientation to date. At the same time, smallholder farmers are themselves undergoing differentiation, thereby adding to the labour pool. Yet, this may also be mitigated by inward-looking policy measures that reinforce the conditions of smallholder production and induce the growth of cooperativism and rural industries capable of re-organising the labour process. The political struggle between the three modes of farming however remains unequal and will be determined by a number of factors.

The economics and politics of the popular classes after land reform are hinged on food sovereignty, but this competes with the gravitation of some of them and the larger-scale farmers towards production for export markets through tied contracts. Lacking broad-based finance to invest in infrastructure, fertilisers and

machinery, agricultural potential is only realised slowly and differentiation across class and region will deepen, with adverse consequences for national cohesion, and the weakening of rural movements. The re-emergence of informal land rental markets between the better performers and the weaker ones (Moyo 2013), and restrictive macro-economic conditions and labour shortages, have contributed to this differentiation. Although land tenure is generally secure (Moyo 2013), domestic and foreign agricultural and financial interests advocate the conversion of the current leasehold land rights into freehold tenures. The land tenure status of the remaining farm workers, some of whom have been re-inserted into labour-tenancy relations, is poor (Chambati 2013), despite the state's informal commitment to their protection. Such tendencies represent local class differentiation across all agro-ecological regions and heralds future conflicts over access to land and natural resources.

The dominant factor in shaping the accumulation trajectory remains the structural power of monopoly capital, which has opposed the radicalisation process and undermined progressive agrarian change by imposing severe limits on Zimbabwe's economic recovery (see Moyo and Nyoni 2013). From 1998, financial isolation and a capital strike had led to a severe shortage economy, leading the state towards an interventionist economic strategy; something unique under contemporary neoliberalism. While the state initially had no comprehensive plan to defend against sanctions (Moyo and Yeros 2007a), this emerged as the internal and external contradictions escalated. The key constraint was how to finance inputs subsidies, mechanisation, irrigation and other agrarian infrastructures. The outcome also reflected both the class bias of the state and its reaction to the generalised strike by private banks and bilateral and multilateral donors.

An extroverted strategy was eventually embraced through various mechanisms. First is the retention of plantation enclaves, and

submission to the logic of its global financial circuits (e.g. of sugar). Second is the expansion of contract farming, re-establishing commodity export and inputs markets (especially of cotton and tobacco) linked to monopoly finance circuits. Third was the adoption at the peak of hyperinflation of a neoliberal policy on currency ('dollarisation'), capital, trade and agricultural markets (Moyo 2011a, 2011b). Dependence on external finance, inputs and markets has exercised overriding power in tilting, once again, the internal balance between social classes, while Western sanctions against Zimbabwe, including those against the parastatals spearheading the economic recovery, were retained.

Notable counter-tendencies suggest that this policy of 'normalisation' has not totally extinguished the dirigisme of the state. The new black bourgeoisie, still acutely vulnerable to a monopolistic world market, remains in conflict with international capital, as are the popular classes from which the nationalist leadership must still claim legitimacy. The state has not abandoned the import substitution industrialisation (ISI) policy or its intention to mediate pro-actively in favour of black capital, and secondarily for smallholder farmers. The class character of state power, the strategies of the black bourgeoisie, and the re-grouping of social forces are the three further factors that will co-determine the balance of forces.

Some elements of this changed economic structure are not entirely unique within the African continent but their clear demarcation in state policy, and the dynamic by which they have been established, make the Zimbabwe case unique. Indeed, Zimbabwe has rowed against the current trend to meet the rest of Africa halfway by breaking up the large-scale farming system established during the 19th century scramble, broadening the small-scale capitalist sector, which had also been introduced by the colonial regime, and preserving some agro-industrial estates (Moyo 2011b). The fundamental question is whether Zimbabwe will be able to sustain an

introverted process of accumulation ‘from below’, including the policy of national food self-sufficiency and substituting for imported petrol by expanding the cultivation of sugarcane to produce ethanol to meet domestic transport and some industrial requirements (Moyo 2011b). Such investments are being made via joint ventures with foreign capital, from the East, West and South, under the ‘Look East Policy’.

Zimbabwe’s current wider indigenisation and empowerment policies reflect the persistence of a specifically *nationalist* accumulation strategy promoted by black capitalists with connections to the state (Moyo and Yeros 2013). For, despite having sunk roots of their own in the means of production, they remain vulnerable to both monopolistic forces and the need to maintain legitimacy *vis-à-vis* popular forces. Black capital seeks to consolidate its position by recourse to a pro-active state, against what it considers to be its main obstacle: Western monopoly capital. The empowerment ideology and programme has however itself fuelled broad-based demands for state procurement and service markets at various levels in society. Elements of this political dynamic are evident in South Africa’s Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) programme.

Generally, indigenisation is a multi-class strategy, whose class character has oscillated in accordance with the correlation of social and political forces since 1980. In the 1980s, its focus was on a popular land reform policy and the opening up of state tenders to blacks and smaller businesses. During the 1990s it was geared towards the creation of a black bourgeoisie via affirmative action with respect to land, tourism and the service sector, although this did not have much success. Land reform became the focus from 2000. Subsequent efforts towards normalisation have shifted the strategy towards creating majority shareholdings in foreign firms amongst black capitalists. Since 2010 joint ventures or public private partnerships (PPP) between state-owned enterprises and foreign

firms, in state-owned agro-estates, the mining sector and infrastructure development are gaining ground, reflecting the pressures generated by the rise of Chinese capital on the scene. Meanwhile, high-ranking state personnel have positioned themselves in the state-owned corporations driving the joint ventures, undermining the legitimacy and transparency of the strategy.

In response to criticisms of class bias, efforts to broaden the benefits of indigenisation, especially, to the rural areas, reflect the continued need of political elites to meet popular demands to ensure their support during elections. These dynamics may shape the future of national politics and the potentials to manage new conflicts. Moreover, rural cooperativism has yet to deepen its scope and branch out to form wider political alliances through united and autonomous producer associations in farming and other sectors, so as to dislocate the new black bourgeoisie from its political pedestal (Moyo and Yeros 2007a). Various empowerment associations (of the youth, women, community trusts, established small businesses, etc.) have been created largely by lower middle class actors, sometimes with state support. The social agent required to fulfil the aspirations of popular agrarian change and wider development has to go beyond welfarist associationalism towards the struggle against monopoly capitalism and to sustain pressure on the reconfigured state.

2.6. Managing External Dimensions of the Conflict

Progressive internal reforms often invite aggressive external regime change interventions which polarise politics. Internal dynamics, including the class character of the land reform and indigenisation strategy and the ongoing social struggles, determine the ability of the state to manage conflict, while sustaining inward-looking accumulation processes which promote legitimacy (see Moyo and Yeros 2013). Thus, innovative national and regional foreign

policy is crucial in creating the external conditions for sustaining internal stability and peace.

Zimbabwe's radicalisation entailed a re-definition of external relations and the meaning of sovereignty, through a new 'positive non-alignment policy', couched as a 'Look East' policy, as well as innovative regional initiatives in order to create economic and political cover from external interventions, while negotiating new forms of integration into world markets. This represented a case of rowing against neoliberal hegemony and present day imperialist tactics, by a small country of apparently limited geo-strategic importance. The defence of Zimbabwe's reforms against external aggression required a foreign policy which effectively mobilised regional solidarity and support, building on liberation history. The emerging economic contest between the East and the West on various political and economic fronts became instrumental.

The Fast Track Land Reform occurred when the scramble for African land and natural resources was escalating, and at a time when a less acknowledged source of the scramble, namely the changing security context of the continent was shifting. Several interrelated events had shaken the foundations of the US geo-strategy in Southern Africa. Firstly, although the political transition in South Africa was controlled, it deprived the Western alliance of a staunch ally in Southern Africa. Secondly state fracture and the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) weakened the United States' main security pillar in Central Africa. These two Cold War pillars of US strategy (the apartheid state and the Mobutu regime) collapsed over a few years. Thirdly, despite its relative geopolitical insignificance, the re-radicalisation of the liberation movement in Zimbabwe challenged outright the controlled character of the transitions to majority rule. This led President Bush to characterise Zimbabwe as 'an unusual and extraordinary threat' to the USA (2002).

These events were compounded by escalating disputes over the control of various parts of Africa, especially those with critical sources of energy. The current scramble for resources in Southern Africa, typified by the recent foreign (and domestic) land and resource grabbing has antecedents in the past, and some of its determinants are not only systemic but also reflect evolving geo-strategic facts on the ground. Efforts from the East to gain control over a share of African energy resources, commodity markets and land led to calls for an auctioning of African resources to enable equal access to all potential foreign buyers (Collier and Venables 2012). This view obscures the ongoing rigging of world markets through protectionism, subsidies and monopolistic behaviour of monopoly finance capital.

The establishment of the United States Africa Command (AFRICOM) (deemed unnecessary at the height of the Cold War), whose most immediate target may be China, reflects the loss of firm control over large swathes of the continent (Moyo and Yeros 2013). In the wake of the Libya intervention, and the ‘Arab Spring’ in general, external intervention has taken more complex forms. Clearly Zimbabwe was a critical laboratory for the combined use of ‘soft power’ (via NGOs and support to opposition parties) and direct economic pressure through sanctions. In this regard, Mahmood Mamdani (2011) has argued that internal democratic reforms against the privileges of internal elites are essential to prevent future Libya-style interventions. This is true; but we know that such interventions are selective, typically to support extroverted economic interests and to conserve client and corrupt political systems. The North African revolts have themselves led to ‘popular’ elections which have propelled to power economically and socially conservative forces.

That Western sabre-rattling against Zimbabwe did not result in a Libya-style intervention or the types of external interventions that have occurred commonly since the early 1990s in West and East

Africa and recently in Lybia has to do, in large measure, with the new Southern African Development Community (SADC) security framework. Despite all its prevarications, this is now anchored in a mutual defence pact, which has been uniquely effective in preventing the further militarisation of the Zimbabwe question (Moyo and Yeros 2011). Indeed, the SADC mutual defence pact, which grew out of the 1998 intervention in the DRC, can be seen as a pioneering security structure not only in Africa, but also in the rest of the South.⁴ SADC continues to mediate the electoral conflict in Lesotho and through military intervention and peace building, the regional conflict in the DRC. The SADC negotiated coalition governments in Zimbabwe and Madagascar, although it remained shaky (Moyo and Yeros, 2009).

Zimbabwe's Look East policy (LEP), launched in 2004, is not as new as it appears because since independence, it abided consistently by its founding foreign policy principles based on non-alignment.⁵ After the Cold War, non-alignment fell into disuse, often discarded as 'antique' (Patel and Chan 2006, p. 180), although African scholars recognise the need to reclaim this principle under the new world systemic conditions. Issa Shivji has argued that Africa must 'define its solidarity with the oppressed people against both established and developing imperial hegemonies' (2012). In so doing, the positing of equivalence between Western imperialism and the emerging semi-peripheries must be avoided.

'Positive' non-alignment is the principle at stake, and should not be confused with 'neutrality' or 'isolationism'. It entails (a) non-participation in the military projects of the great powers, which *de facto* means the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), given that the emerging semi-peripheries have not embarked on militarisation; and (b) the freedom to judge each foreign policy issue on its own merits, based on national sovereignty and interests. This

means preserving the right and capacity to impose conditions on foreign economic interests regardless of their origins.

Zimbabwe's LEP is 'complementary, rather than an alternative to engaging with the West' (Patel and Chan 2006, p. 182) as it has neither turned its back on Western capital, nor accepted investment from China and the rest of the East or South without conditions. Nor, indeed, has it rejected military assistance from any single source, including the West. However, it stubbornly confronted NATO strategy and, consequently, suffered an arms embargo since the DRC intervention in 1998. This foreign policy is a method of circumventing Western sanctions and, by engaging with China, as an instrument to force the West back into investing in Zimbabwe on conditions consistent with its indigenisation and empowerment policy.

The economic aspect of the non-alignment strategy is beginning to bear fruit as various joint ventures are being negotiated. On the other hand, Zimbabwe's arms procurement policy has not had the same effect. The West previously had participated in arms sales to Zimbabwe together with China. However, from 2000 onwards, Zimbabwe has purchased arms only from non-Western countries, mainly China, but also the Ukraine and Libya.

Zimbabwe's LEP thus appears as a vanguard way of re-defining positive non-alignment in the post-Cold War world (Shivji 2012). Evidently, the only other African states that have effectively upheld a similar policy, although without the radical restructuring of their internal relations, have been Angola and Sudan. Other African countries appear to be crafting non-alignment frameworks, to widen their room for manoeuvre during this era of monopoly capitalism.

2.7. Concluding Remarks

Historical structures, protracted armed struggle and contemporary processes of capitalist development shape the persistent conflict regime of Southern Africa. The reconciliation pacts that led to majority rule have always been fragile, given that racial privilege has been retained through unequal control over land, minerals and natural resources. These structures are largely dominated by monopoly finance capital and the domestic white bourgeoisie, but incorporate small sections of an indigenous bourgeois class, at the expense of the landless and poor peasants.

Radicalisation in Zimbabwe produced major structural changes focused on land ownership and agricultural production, but this generated new class contradictions and conflicts exacerbated by continued Western sanctions. Pressures for radical change in South Africa are highlighted by growing calls for radical land reform, while widespread and increasingly violent urban protests portend new conflicts, which a neoliberal developmental state cannot assuage. Even in 'stable democracies' such as Botswana, Zambia and Malawi, the social crisis provoked by neoliberalism is increasingly evoking political polarisation. SADC's regional approach to conflict mediation has provided internal solutions to some critical electoral conflicts, but it does not tackle the structural transformation required to address the roots of land-based conflict.

Notes

¹ Parts of this chapter have been reworked from Moyo and Yeros (2013).

² ‘Chaos’ theorists have seen this as the ‘destruction of the state’ (Hammar et al. 2003).

³ Class analysis of the new Zimbabwe must come to grips with the tendencies and contradictions of this tri-modal structure, and avoid theories of ‘rentier economy’ (Davies 2005) or ‘crony capitalism’ (Bond 2009), or notions of ‘passive revolution’, which are based on nebulous assessments of the new class relations (e.g. Raftopoulos 2010).

⁴ This involved Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia against the US-sponsored invasion by Rwanda and Uganda (and then broadened to the rest of the SADC in 2003).

⁵ These principles are (a) national sovereignty and equality among nations, (b) attainment of a socialist, egalitarian and democratic society, (c) right of all peoples to self-determination and independence, (d) non-racialism at home and abroad, and (e) positive non-alignment and peaceful co-existence among nations (Patel 1985; Patel and Chan 2006).

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Utilising ‘African Potentials’ to Resolve Conflicts in a Changing Agrarian Situation in Central Zimbabwe

Grasian Mkodzongi

3.1. Introduction

The process of land redistribution under the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) in Zimbabwe has been until recently a subject of contentious debates (Hammar et al. 2003; Mamdani 2008; Moyo et al. 2009; Scoones et al. 2010; Matondi 2012; Hanlon et al. 2012). In the period immediately after land occupations in 2000, lack of evidence led to many claims being made about how the land reform unfolded in the countryside. Theories of chaos and violence (Hammar et al. 2003) were deployed to describe the largely negative impact of fast track land reform. Debates about the outcomes of land reform in terms of how people accessed and were resettled on the land and the trajectory of social organisation after the land reform were often undermined by the absence of empirical evidence to justify claims of chaos, violence and disorder in newly resettled areas (NRAs). Moreover, the highly polarised political environment prevailing at the time became a major focus of academic debates rather than an investigation into land reform dynamics on the ground. An important factor to take into consideration when analysing how the land reform unfolded in the countryside and the conflicts that emerged is that many land beneficiaries came from diverse geographical and ethnic backgrounds. Such people were often ‘strangers’ resettled together with no shared kinship ties. However, the new social environment required them to work collectively to resolve common challenges.

According to Dekker and Kinsey (2011, p. 6), besides living as newly acquainted neighbours, 'the new inhabitants had to solve various problems of collective action together relating to natural resource management, inputs for agricultural production ... and the management of risk and uncertainty'.

Contested claims of belonging to the NRAs significantly shaped the trajectory of social organisation in the aftermath of resettlement. Thus, the relationships among newly resettled households have been dynamic, influenced also by their heterogeneity based on class, ethnicity and geographical location. Although the land beneficiaries shared a common objective of gaining access to land, they often competed against each other to access livelihood opportunities associated with new land. Therefore, an understanding of the trajectory of social organisation post land reform cannot only be based on notions of solidarity among the newly resettled farmers. Interviews with informants indicated that histories of colonial forced removals and enclosure in the wider Mhondoro Ngezi area influenced claims of ancestral autochthony which materialised during the resettlement process. Many of those resettled at the former Damvuri Conservancy in Mhondoro Ngezi claimed to have been forcefully removed from the area during colonial forced removals of the 1940s (Nyambara 2005). Therefore, such people tended to conceptualise the land reform process as a way of recovering ancestral lands lost during the colonial era. However, in the early stages of the land reform in 2000, contested claims of belonging to the new land became a source of conflict.

People from diverse geographical and ethnic backgrounds competed against each other to make claims over the new land and to control access to the existing socio-economic opportunities. However, the Mhondoro Ngezi case study shows such conflicts were not a permanent social phenomenon, as new kinship ties, social relationships and institutions transcending ethnic backgrounds gradually emerged in the aftermath of the land reform.

This article contributes to ongoing debates about migration, autochthony and belonging in sub-Saharan Africa; it challenges some aspects of this revisionist debate which tends to cast the so-called ‘outsiders’ as archetypal victims of migration lacking agency and unable to belong. It shows the instrumentality of new kinship ties to the way land conflicts were resolved during a changing agrarian situation based on ethnographic data gathered from 185 households resettled in the Mhondoro Ngezi district of Zimbabwe. The concept of kinship adopted here is what Sahlins (2013, p. 4) called the ‘mutuality of being’. According to Sahlins kinsfolk are ‘persons who intrinsically participate in each other’s existence’; in this way kinship transcends biology to encompass ‘social construction’.

3.2. Autochthony and Belonging: Contested Debates

Most literature on autochthony and belonging in Africa has highlighted how claims of autochthony are based on the ‘urge to detect difference and to distinguish between ... autochthons ... on one hand and ... strangers ... on the other’ (Nyamnjoh 2006, p. 3). In his study of belonging in South Africa and Botswana, Nyamnjoh (2006, p. 13) shows how ‘anti-immigrant sentiment is both strong and extremely widespread cutting across virtually every socio-economic and demographic group’. Similarly, in their study of autochthony and belonging in West Africa, Geschiere and Nyamnjoh (2000, p. 3) observed that ‘notions of autochthony have an effect of creating an us–them opposition ... and are capable of arousing strong emotions about the defence of home’.

This literature has focused on how claims of autochthony lead to discrimination, and in some places violence, towards those perceived as ‘strangers or outsiders’ (Geschiere and Nyamnjoh 2000; Nyamnjoh 2006; Geschiere 2009). However, these studies paid limited attention to the way the so-called ‘outsiders’ adapt to their

new environment. This often reifies the so-called 'outsiders' or 'strangers' as archetypal victims of migration with no agency to address their 'outsider' status. As a result, analyses of the dynamics of migration, autochthony and belonging are reduced to a bi-polar debate on 'strangers and autochthones' 'insiders and outsiders' 'first comers and late comers' with little consideration for the agency of strangers and their ability to adapt their new environment in their quest to gradually 'belong'.

Yet studies undertaken elsewhere have demonstrated how 'newcomers seek to construct a place they can again call home' through 'negotiations with neighbours' (Castles and Davidson 2000, p. 130). For example Hage (1997, p. 132) highlighted how Lebanese immigrants in the west of Sydney (Australia) utilised what he calls 'material goods and other cultural symbols' from their place of origin to create a new sense of home 'as a base from which to perceive and grasp the Australian opportunities'. This shows that immigrants are not passive victims of discrimination or xenophobia, as they are actively involved in what Pascoe (1992) calls 'place-making' in their new environment. According to Castles and Davidson (2000, p. 132) place making involves 'naming, rituals and the creation of institutions'. This process may involve 'giving homeland names to places in the new country and business signs in homeland languages'. Rituals and institutions created by immigrants are instrumental in how they affirm belonging to the new place while institutions such as welfare clubs and associations provide social services that the community needs (ibid., p. 132).

Moyo and Mine (Chapter 1) have explored the concept of African potentials¹ which they define as the 'capabilities of Africans to bring solutions to contradictions among the people, utilising indigenous knowledge and human relations that have constantly transformed and accumulated at the level of people's everyday life'. This concept, although still in its infancy, provides an alternative way of theorising African modes of thoughts (Chapter 8 by

Sadomba) and ways of conflict resolution and co-existence which have received limited attention in mainstream debates on conflict resolution in Africa. Underpinning this epistemological approach is the ‘resurrection’ of traditionalist approaches to conflict resolution largely ignored in mainstream debates.

3.3. Contested Claims of Autochthony and Belonging in Mhondoro Ngezi

Land beneficiaries resettled at the former white owned Damvuri Conservancy in the Mhondoro Ngezi District of Zimbabwe during the implementation of the FTLRP were not by any means a homogeneous group. They can be grouped into three broad categories based on their places of origin. First, those who came from the low-lying areas of Sanyati and Gokwe to the west of Zimbabwe constitute the majority of the land beneficiaries. The second group are those who came from the nearby Mhondoro Communal Area (CA) and the adjacent old resettlement areas. The third and last group consists of the people from the gold and platinum mines in the broader Mhondoro Ngezi area, the urban areas of Kadoma, Kwekwe and Chegutu, former farm workers from the conservancy and other former large scale commercial farms (LSCF) in the area. It is important to highlight here that land reform was a process rather than a once-off event; some people belong to the same category, but acquired land at different times. Some were the so-called pioneers who joined the occupation led by the initial war veterans in 2000, while others came later during the planning phase, after 2004. Moreover, these broad categories constitute people of different age groups, gender, social and economic backgrounds.

The way people joined the land occupations at the former Damvuri Conservancy varied depending on their place of origin. Those who came from areas far away from the Mhondoro Ngezi

District such as Sanyati and Gokwe mostly followed a rather formal process by registering their interest in land either through local war veterans (who mobilised landless peasants during the land reform) or the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) party local branches. Such people organised themselves into groups and travelled to the town of Kadoma where they camped at the District Administrator's (DA) office for 'processing' before they were transported to the Damvuri Conservancy and other surrounding farms. Such a process took days or weeks before people were resettled. Those who were already on the waiting list were contacted by the DA's office and allocated land.

The land beneficiaries from areas near the Damvuri Conservancy such as residents of the Mhondoro Ngezi CA, old resettlement areas in Mhondoro Ngezi district, former farm workers, urbanites and miners simply joined the war veterans who had occupied the conservancy and thereafter formally registered their interest in land. Due to the bureaucratic nature of land occupations in Mhondoro Ngezi, those who joined the occupation directly were also registered with the DA's office in Kadoma before they were allocated land.

This diversity of ethnic and geographical background was a source of conflicts over access to land especially in the first stages of resettlement. As highlighted earlier, due to colonial histories of forced removals of Africans from the broader Mhondoro Ngezi area in the 1940s, many of those who were allocated land at the former conservancy claimed an 'autochthonous' connection with the area. As a result, in the early stages of the land reform *makuva* (graves) and *matongo* (ruined homesteads) and *mapfupa emadzitateguru* (bones of ancestors) became 'active' and 'materialised different, entangled discourses ... of autochthony and belonging' to the new land (Fontein 2011, p. 712).

In the aftermath of land reform, ethnicity and geographical background generally influenced the way people contested for

leadership positions in local structures of authority such as Village Development Committees (VIDCOs), Ward Development Committees (WADCOs), and in ZANU-PF party local structures. During such contests, people tended to generally support candidates with whom they had a shared history, *vematongo* (ruins). For example, those who came from the Gokwe area tended to support candidates from that area. This was also the case with those who came from the nearby Mhondoro Ngezi CA. Interviews with informants from both groups indicated that the reason for this was that during the resettlement process, people competed for scarce government subsidies and access to land. Voting for someone with whom one had a shared history or kinship ties made economic sense since it enhanced one's chances of accessing government subsidies.

Moreover, interviews with informants indicated that in the early stages of the land reform there was a tendency of people to label those whom they perceived as 'strangers' as *varoyi* (witches). For example, former residents of the Mhondoro Ngezi CA blamed those who came from Gokwe for practising 'witchcraft' which they claimed was 'common in that place' (Interview with Muzudzi at Damvuri on 23 November 2011). Similarly, those from Gokwe accused the former residents of the Mhondoro Ngezi CA of being lazy and of 'deploying *zvikwambo* (goblins) to steal wealth from "others"' (Interview with Chenedza at Damvuri on 23 December 2011). Through informal conversations with people from both groups, accusations and counter accusations of witchcraft seemed to stem from the difficult socio-economic situation and competition for land and other natural resources. Since access to farming inputs and other government subsidies was generally difficult, this created competition and animosity among people of diverse ethnic and geographical backgrounds. In general, geographical background and ethnicity played a central role in the way people were socially organised, especially in the early stages of resettlement.

Between 2000 and 2003, the so-called *jambanja* era (*jambanja* means violence), communal area networks remained critical for livelihood security in NRAs. These networks acted as reservoirs of labour necessary for clearing fields and setting up of new homes. Again, such networks were also critical in the early stages of land occupations when security of tenure at occupied farms could not be guaranteed. Land occupiers often had to utilise their social networks in CAs as a safety net in the event of evictions or when facing food shortages. Historically, communal area social networks in Zimbabwe are critical in the way rural households can mobilise labour through *nhimbes* (work parties). *Nhimbes* are reciprocal labour arrangements based on established social networks, among people who have lived in the same place and hence had established relationships based on mutual trust (Scoones et al. 2010).

Being resettled among *vatorwa* (strangers) meant that newly resettled households generally lacked ‘social capital’ which is necessary in times of socio-economic challenges. According to Deng (2010, p. 2), social capital is ‘the bonding and ... the stock of reciprocal networks of trust’ which people utilise in times of socio-economic stress. Social capital provides a form of ‘informal insurance’ (Dekker 2004) which people utilise to develop ‘personalised trust’ (Fafchamps 2004, 2006) and rely on in times of need. In her study exploring social organisation among farmers resettled after Zimbabwe’s independence, Barr (2004, p. 1753), noted that ‘one of the tasks facing newly resettled villagers was to forge social relationships and thereby transform their new co-villagers from strangers into neighbours and their villages from mere clusters of homesteads into effective communities’. Similarly, in her study of risk sharing among resettled farmers in Zimbabwe, Dekker (2004, p. 6) observed that ‘resettled households actively invested in new relations in their villages; they started to attend churches and established a variety of non-religious associations’. These studies demonstrate the importance of new kinship ties to

the way people cope with the risks associated with mobility and resettlement. As this chapter will demonstrate, in Mhondoro Ngezi, people who came from areas far away from the NRAs, such as Gokwe, generally struggled as they had limited recourse to social networks in their areas of origin. Unlike their counterparts who came from the nearby Mhondoro Ngezi CA, such people relied on a small network of people with whom they came. Thus such people needed to ‘invest in new relations’ (Dekker 2004) as a way of coping with the socio-economic risks of resettlement.

3.4. Changing Dynamics of Autochthony and Belonging Post the FTLRP

As highlighted earlier, the fast track land reform in Mhondoro Ngezi was underpinned by contested claims of belonging among a diverse group of people resettled in the same area. However, the dynamics of these contested claims changed with time as new relationships developed among former strangers.

Interviews with informants a decade after the land reform show how for example new burials and graves ‘materialised’ new claims of belonging among those who were labelled as strangers such as former farm workers of foreign ancestry and those who came from far areas. Such people were previously viewed as strangers from foreign countries who did not ‘belong’, however the death of their kin and the subsequent burials at Damvuri after the land reform provided them with a ‘special connection with the soil’ (Geschiere 2009, p. 2) which they previously lacked since they did not own any land. This has helped to legitimise their new claims.

Exogamous marriages among former strangers and the discovery of kin through totems also led to new kinship ties. A few biographies² gathered in Mhondoro Ngezi summarised below highlight the dynamics of belonging and autochthony and the way

new kinship ties and social networks developed among people who previously viewed each other as strangers.

The case of Mr Chitenga who came from Gokwe in the Midlands Province of Zimbabwe and joined land occupations at the former Damvuri conservancy demonstrates the changing dynamics of belonging after resettlement:

I came from Gokwe and was allocated land at Damvuri in 2000. When we first came here, we suffered a lot of discrimination from people who came from the Mhondoro Ngezi area (a distance of approximately 300 km). They viewed us as strangers from another part of the country who had come to take land from locals. However, things changed when my wife died in 2003. I married another wife from a family that came from Mhondoro Ngezi Communal Area. This meant that I was now part of the Mhondoro Ngezi family through marriage. Things changed after my marriage as I was now viewed as a son in law and a member of their extended family. After that, I am no longer viewed as a muuyi (stranger) but part of an extended family (Interviewed at Damvuri on 27 October 2010).

Another case in point, similar to the one provided above is that of Mr Phiri who used to be a farm worker at the Damvuri Conservancy before it was occupied by war veterans in 2000:

I used to be a farm worker here, we are of Malawian origin. My father came from Malawi in the 1960s, he worked in white owned farms across the wider Mhondoro Ngezi area until he died in 2006 and was buried here at Damvuri. Before the land reform we were viewed as foreigners, locals called us by all sorts of names, some called us 'mabwidi or manyasarandi'. However, after the land reform I was allocated a plot here where my father is buried. I now have a home and feel that since my father is buried here, I now belong here like everybody else. I am connected to this soil through the bones of

my father and his spirit that protects me and my children (Interviewed at Damvuri on 27 October 2010).

The above cases demonstrate the significance of burials to the way claims of belonging can be legitimised. The burial of Mr Phiri's father at Damvuri brought a new sense of legitimacy to his bid to establish a 'connection with the soil'. Since graves are instrumental to the way autochthonic claims can be made Mr Phiri felt that his father's burial had provided him with the vital link with the soil which he previously lacked as a foreigner from another country. His father's grave thus 'materialised' his claims of belonging to the new land. Mr Phiri's story highlights the importance of new *makuva* (graves) to the way former farm workers of foreign ancestry have been able to legitimise their claims of belonging in the aftermath of the land reform.

Mitupo and *zvidawo* (totems and praise names) also provided another avenue for some people to identify kin with people initially perceived as strangers. In the aftermath of the land reform, totems have become 'active' (Fontein 2011) and instrumental to the way family histories can be traced, and kin lost due to histories of migration and forced removals are rediscovered. Some people have been able to identify some of their family members who returned to *kumatongo* (ruins) through fast track land reform. The story of Mrs Lozane provides a good example of the instrumentality of totems in the discovery of lost kin:

My family was forcibly removed from the Rhodesdale estate (former large ranch where Damvuri is located) and relocated to Sanyati in 1941. We used the land reform process to come back to our 'ancestral home' after securing a plot at Damvuri in 2003. In 2008, I discovered that I had a cousin brother at Damvuri after I asked him his totem and his family background. When he told me that his totem was *mbofu* (eland) and that his praise name was *mbofuyemukono* which

was similar to mine, I further asked him his family history. Through this chance encounter, I discovered that he was a close relative belonging to a part of my family which was evicted from Rhodesdale and resettled in chief Nembudziya area in Gokwe, instead of Sanyati where my part of the family was relocated. After this discovery, I feel happy that at least I have a relative here who can help if I have problems or I get sick. I feel I have been reunited with part of my family I lost during the colonial era (Interviewed at Damvuri on 29 November 2010).

Similarly, the case of Mr Dube who came from the Chiwundura Communal Area and was resettled at Damvuri in 2003 provides another example of how newly resettled people are utilising totems to identify potential kin among ‘strangers’:

I came here from Chiwundura communal area in 2003, people who were allocated land here came from diverse locations, others from Gokwe, Mhondoro and Sanyati. Because we did not know each other or related to each other, it was rather difficult to settle here. People were generally suspicious of each other and thus did not help each other during difficult times. However, the situation is now different, in 2010 I identified a brother and aunt at a village meeting through our *mbizi* (Zebra) totem. *Mbizi imwechete* (there is only one zebra). The fact that there is only one mbizi means that all people of the mbizi totem are my relatives since we can trace our history to one *dzinza* (clan). Since I now have relatives here, I invite them to participate in family rituals such as *kurova guva* ceremonies (a ceremony meant to bring back the spirit of the dead relative which is normally conducted a year after their death) and other family cultural activities such as marriages and funerals. I also have people who can help in times of need such as funerals or food shortages (Interviewed at Damvuri on 29 November 2010).

These cases show the instrumentality of totems to the way lost kin are discovered and new social networks have emerged. This process is underpinned by histories of migration and return to ancestral lands where families who were separated are reunited through the land reform.

Political parties played an important role in the way new farmers were socially organised, especially in the early stages of fast track land reform. During the land occupations, the ZANU-PF political party played an important role in the way land occupiers were mobilised and socially organised. ZANU-PF membership was also central to the way people who came from diverse ethnic and geographical backgrounds could work together as a new form of belonging crystallised around the land occupations, which were by default associated with ZANU-PF membership. Such belonging provided those perceived as ‘strangers’ with legitimate claims over land. As one informant argued:

[W]e are all Zimbabweans, we belong here, we all fought in the liberation struggle, we belong to ZANU PF, we should get land anywhere in Zimbabwe regardless of our ethnic background. How can I be a stranger in my own country? Every black Zimbabwean is entitled to a piece of land regardless of where they originally came from. (Interview with Bere at Damvuri on 7 June 2012).

This case shows how despite the fact that the ZANU-PF political party has been criticised for promoting violence especially towards perceived opposition supporters and people of foreign origin (Hammar et al. 2003), united new land beneficiaries. In Mhondoro Ngezi ZANU-PF membership was a source of cohesion among people who were initially suspicious of each other in the early stages of the land reform. Those accused of being outsiders or ‘foreigners’ actively utilised land restitution and indigenisation discourses popularised by the party to make claims over land and to

claim belonging to the new land as black Zimbabweans who equally suffered from colonial oppression. This however does not deny the fact that in some places former farm workers and perceived opposition supporters were victims of the political violence particularly during the early stages of the fast track land reform. This group of people in some areas tended to support their white landowners and defended against land occupations which led to animosity with the ZANU-PF supporters and war veterans.

These biographies and recordings show the changing dynamics of autochthony and belonging. They demonstrate that, although people competed against each other to make claims over land in the early stages of the land reform, they had to eventually work together to address a wide variety of socio-economic challenges later in the aftermath of resettlement. Thus, old schisms based on ethnicity, ancestry and geographical background were gradually phased out in favour of associational networks of mutual benefit; in short people started to 'participate in each other's lives' (Sahlins 2013, p. 4). This does not mean that conflicts ceased post the land reform; what these interviews and biographies highlight is that no one is a permanent stranger; competing claims of autochthony and belonging are dynamic and are likely to change with time as people develop new kinship ties and associational networks of mutual reciprocity.

Despite their depiction as remnants of colonial rule by scholars such as Mamdani (1996), customary authorities have played an important role in the way people from diverse ethnic backgrounds developed new kinship ties. Although the three chiefs based in the nearby Mhondoro Ngezi Communal Area have contested each other to control newly resettled areas (Mkodzongi 2013), such chiefs have provided the new farmers with a sense of belonging. In order to legitimise their authority in the newly resettled areas, the chiefs have welcomed the newly resettled farmers as part of an extended family. They have also promoted solidarity among their

‘new’ subjects as a way of addressing conflicts over land. This egalitarian behaviour of the chiefs is owed to the fact that, in the early stages of the land reform, some of the newly resettled farmers were reluctant to submit to customary authority as they felt that they had been offered land by the government unlike their counterparts in communal areas who were offered land by customary authorities.

As a result, the chiefs had to go out of their way to convince their ‘new subjects’ that they belonged to the local area. Customary courts have thus played a central role in resolving conflicts over land, adultery, petty thefts and domestic violence. Since chiefs are part of the rural authority structure, they too have played an important role of lobbying the state to provide agricultural inputs to their subject communities. This shows the progressive role of traditional leaders which is often given less attention in literature. Through their role as agents of local development and social cohesion, chiefs have played a key role in promoting social cohesion among their new subjects.

3.5. Social Organisation after the Land Reform

The new spirit of cooperation and mutual understanding among the farmers has resulted in a wide variety of social organisations and institutions. These include local development associations focused on mobilising resources for building infrastructure such as schools, dams and sinking boreholes. Other associational networks such as local farmer groups and burial societies are concerned with addressing social challenges.

Newly resettled farmers at Damvuri were faced with a wide variety of challenges after resettlement. These involved, *inter alia*, the absence of infrastructure, access to markets, and establishing new communities from scratch at a time of severe economic challenges. Although new associations and networks took time to

emerge, they now play a key role in the way the new farmers are socially organised. In his study of social organisation in the Zvimba District of Zimbabwe, Murisa (2007, p. 5) noted that 'rural communities have developed innovative support systems that cushion against vulnerability and that enhance the quality of life. These support systems include social arrangements of reciprocity, compulsory norms of generosity, communal land and work sharing'. In Mhondoro Ngezi, the absence of schools, clinics and clean water at Damvuri eventually led to the formation of a local development association and other various associational networks and social institutions of mutual reciprocity.

The development association was formed with the aim of co-ordinating local development activities given the absence of local state and NGO development initiatives. Its leadership comprises village heads, Village Development Committees (VIDCOs), war veterans, local ZANU-PF leadership and the Ward Councillor. The association sought to spearhead the mobilisation of resources to build infrastructure such as schools, dams and boreholes. It also acts as a platform for local people to lobby politicians and to voice their grievances to the state. Its activities involve regular meetings where people from all the eight villages are invited to participate. These meetings provide an opportunity for people to discuss problems they face in their respective communities and propose and/or seek solutions. Common problems discussed range from the absence of clean water, dams for irrigation and watering livestock, unemployment, HIV/AIDS, clinics, libraries and connection to the electricity grid. For example, at one meeting I attended, various interest groups highlighted the challenges they faced and their needs: Mrs Mukora, who represents a women's association, had this to say:

We need boreholes in every village; as women we have to travel for five kilometres in search of water every day as there is only

borehole in our Village. We want the government or the local leadership to secure funds for borehole drilling (Recorded at Damvuri on 23 October 2010).

Mr Ruhanya, who represented the Damvuri Primary School Development Association, also highlighted the problems they were facing in constructing classrooms since their children were currently attending lessons in former tobacco barns:

We need financial resources to finish building classrooms. The place where our children are attending classes cannot be called a school, it is just a shade! We want the government and other stakeholders such as Non-Governmental Organisations to provide us with help (Recorded at Damvuri on 23 October 2010).

Mr Ncube, who represents a HIV/AIDS support group, also highlighted the challenges facing people living with HIV/AIDS in terms of accessing health facilities and support:

People living with HIV/AIDS here at Damvuri are struggling to survive. There is no clinic, we face difficulties in accessing information and financial resources to coordinate HIV/AIDS awareness activities. The coordinator needs a bicycle in order to travel to all 8 villages to visit HIV/AIDS support groups (Recorded at Damvuri on 23 October 2010).

These recordings highlight some of the challenges faced by the newly resettled farmers and how they are organising themselves to address them. Representatives of local authorities highlighted also how they were going to take these problems to higher authorities or how, for example, they were going to engage local mining companies to provide help. What was reflected was that people did not only expect the government to provide help but also NGOs

and private companies. However, this is despite the fact that there are hardly any NGOs operating in the area. Moreover, other people emphasised the need for people to pool resources together in order to address some of the problems, such as donating labour and money to build the primary school.

The development association also acts as a bridge between ordinary people and local state structures such as VIDCOs and Ward councillors. It also coordinates local initiatives such as mobilising labour and financial donations from Damvuri residents for the construction of infrastructure such as schools and repairing of boreholes. The association also plays a central role in the way Damvuri farmers leverage development aid from mining companies operating in the area. For example, the development association regularly organises meetings with the Zimbabwe Impala Platinum Subsidiary (ZIMPLATS) mine in order to secure funds for borehole drilling, dam construction and construction of schools. The way the association operates highlights an important aspect of social organisation of newly resettled farmers. Informal structures and formal structures of authority operate hand in hand in their quest to address local developmental needs. For example, VIDCOs and Ward councillors who represent local state authorities play an important part in the local development association's activities as they lend both legitimacy and access to other state structures to access vital inputs and other services.

3.5.1. HIV/AIDS Support Groups

One of the major aspects of fast track land reform, which has received limited attention in literature, is how the large scale mobility of people associated with land reform increased their vulnerability to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. During the land occupations, most men left their communal homes to join war veteran-led land occupations. Since these occupations generally started as protests with no guarantee that they would be sustained,

most men left their wives behind as a security precaution. The process sometimes took many months before a landowner was forced off the land; men were therefore separated from their wives for long periods.

The long separation of men from their wives during the land occupations resulted in men engaging in extra-marital affairs, hence the high incidences of *kubika mapoto* (co-habiting) or the increase in polygamous relationships. These new relationships often increased the vulnerability of households to HIV/AIDS. At Damvuri and the wider area, HIV/AIDS has become a critical issue as it has affected many households. The broader Mhondoro Ngezi area is predominantly a mining area. Historically, mining areas have a higher HIV/AIDS prevalence than the national average (Moyo et al. 2009). Moreover, Damvuri is located in a transit area linking the Mhondoro Ngezi CA with the mining towns of Kwekwe and Kadoma to the west and Mvuma to east. The large scale mobility of people in the area makes it difficult to contain the spread of HIV/AIDS as people are constantly moving from one mine to the other. The new farmers are also doubling up as gold panners and wage labourers at the ZIMPLATS mine as a way of straddling livelihoods. Mine compounds and gold panning sites increase the vulnerability of people to HIV/AIDS. For example, on the fringes of the ZIMPLATS mine is an informal squatter camp called '*kumabuswa*' (the grasses) which houses prostitutes attracted by the presence of 'business' opportunities.

Casual labourers (who are often local farmers) at the mine regularly engage the services of prostitutes who not only provide them with sex but accommodation. The mine does not provide housing for casual workers; hence the squatter camp provides cheap accommodation. Interviews with informants who once worked as wage labourers at the ZIMPLATS mine and had once stayed at *kumabuswa*, indicated that the lack of information about the risks of extra-marital relationships and prostitution increased their

vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). The situation is further worsened by the fact that there are few health facilities in the area. Moreover, there are no HIV/AIDS focused NGOs operating in the area.

In response to the HIV/AIDS crisis, Damvuri residents started a HIV/AIDS support group, which provides information, counselling and psychosocial support to those living with HIV/AIDS. The support group coordinators regularly attend training in what is locally known as 'positive living' in Kadoma. After training, such information about living with HIV/AIDs is shared with their respective local support groups. HIV/AIDS support groups not only play an important role as a source of information about how to access anti-retroviral drugs in the absence of healthcare workers but provide access to anti-retroviral treatment (ART). The support group members access their treatment by sending one person to the nearest clinic in Kadoma to collect drugs. However, support group activities are hampered by lack of transport. The volunteer support group coordinators have to walk across eight villages in order to reach out to their members. During an interview with one coordinator, he highlighted how lack of transport was hampering his ability to coordinate support group activities: 'I need a bicycle in order for me to travel across all villages here at Damvuri; it is difficult to reach out to all those living with HIV/AIDS without transport' (Interview with Nhova on 23 July 2010).

3.5.2. Farmer Co-operatives

One of the major challenges which faced the new farmers was the absence of extension services immediately after resettlement. Such services were difficult to access because the key ministries responsible for providing them such as agricultural research and extension services (AREX) were underfunded. Moreover, key personnel such as extension officers had been lost in the large brain

drain which occurred after 2000. The absence of extension services, especially in the early stages of land reform, had a negative impact on the farming operations of the new farmers. Since such farmers came from diverse agro-ecological locations, they had to adapt to a new agro-ecological environment requiring an understanding of local rainfall patterns, soil types and livestock diseases. This affected their cropping patterns and animal husbandry. Problems of establishing new agrarian operations in new environments compelled the farmers to start new farmer associations as a way of sharing risks, equipment, information and support in the absence of official help.

Local farmer associations that emerged at Damvuri played a role in the way people exchanged expertise. For example, some farmers learnt how to use new technologies such as using knapsacks to spray their livestock against tick-borne diseases in the absence of dip tanks. Interviews with the members of farmers' associations indicated that they provided a platform for the farmers to share information and expertise. For example, those with better knowledge of the local ecology such as former employees of the Damvuri Conservancy helped to orientate their colleagues to the ecological dynamics of the local landscape. As a result, those who were new to the local ecological landscape were able to adjust their cropping patterns to the new environment. Farmers' associations became key sources of information about the availability of inputs and also provided a platform to lobby local politicians in order to access government subsidies (interview with Mutana at Damvuri on 23 October 2010).

Most of the farmers' associations were started after 2006 as a result of high inflation and shortages of inputs. They were central in the way the farmers accessed inputs and marketed their agricultural produce. Unlike in communal areas where people could easily utilise ox-drawn carts to transport agricultural produce to the market or depot, Damvuri had neither a grain or cotton marketing depot.

Agricultural produce had to be marketed in Kadoma where the nearest depots are located. Although Damvuri is situated relatively close to Kadoma (less than 100 km), transporting farm produce required people to pool resources together in order to hire transport as one cannot use ox-drawn carts. Moreover, those growing tobacco had to hire transport to Harare since the marketing of tobacco is centralised. Transport logistics thus required closer cooperation among the farmers. However, the situation might change in the long term once the marketing facilities of both cotton and tobacco are decentralised.

Moreover, those involved in the production of cash crops such as cotton needed to be part of a farmers' group in order to access credit. As a risk control measure, cotton companies require that farmers belong to a group before they become a part of the out-grower schemes which enabled access to credit. Thus, the new farmers had to enter into local farmers' associations as a way of accessing credit or as a way of sharing the cost of transporting produce to the market. Interviews with key informants such as an AREX Officer indicated the new farmers' associations are localised and have limited links to national organisations representing small scale farmers such as the Zimbabwe Farmers Union (ZFU) (interview with Chikozho at Damvuri on 24 October 2010). However, this did not make them less effective in helping the local farmers to deal with their challenges, especially in accessing inputs. Through interviews and informal conversations with the members of farmers' associations, it emerged that such associations provide a platform for the new farmers to engage with the state in order to access help.

The creation of new social institutions based on new kinship networks transcending ethnic and geographical background, shows that contested claims of autochthony and belonging which led to conflicts rather than cooperation among the newly resettled farmers were a temporary phenomenon rather a permanent feature of social

organisation in NRAs. Time is a crucial factor in the way strangers can be turned into neighbours and new kinship ties are developed or old kin are discovered.

3.6. Conclusion

The dynamics of autochthony and belonging during a changing agrarian situation in Mhondoro Ngezi show how contested claims became a source of conflict among newly resettled people in the early stages of the land reform. However, such conflicts were gradually resolved as new social institutions and associational networks among people who once regarded each other as strangers emerged. This article therefore demonstrates how the changing dynamics of autochthony and belonging and the instrumentality of African potentials in resolving conflicts sometimes play out during a changing agrarian situation. This does not mean that conflicts ceased post the land reform – what these interviews and biographies highlight is that no one is a permanent stranger; competing claims of autochthony and belonging are dynamic and are likely to change with time as people develop new kinship ties and associational networks of mutual reciprocity. Contested claims of autochthony and belonging must be treated as a temporary phenomenon which is likely to change with time, as strangers become kin and new social networks and institutions develop among people from diverse ethnic and geographical backgrounds. This localised experience challenges inherent assumptions in some studies of autochthony and belonging which tend to downplay the ability of people to overcome conflicts and co-exist as neighbours to be relied upon in times of need.

Notes

¹ The concept was developed after various workshops funded by the Japanese Society for the Promotion of Science which took place in Kyoto, Nairobi, Harare, Juba, Yaoundé and Addis Ababa.

² The names of informants have been slightly changed to protect their identity as per their informed consent.

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- Mrs Lozane, interviewed on 29/11/10.
- Mrs Mukora, recorded on 23/10/10.
- Mr Mutana, interviewed on 23/10/10.
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Mr Ruhanya, recorded on 23/10/10.

Muzudzi, interviewed on 23/11/11.

Guardian or Mifeasor? Chiefs' Roles in Land Administration under the 1995 Land Act in Zambia

Shuichi Oyama

4.1. Introduction

Land allocation and land tenure security are important issues for contemporary African village communities, because of unequal land allocation under the colonial policy, increases in the population, expansion of cultivated land, refugee movements and resettlement schemes (Gulliver 1961; von Blanckenburg 1993; Sjaastad and Bromley 1997; Moyo 2007). As in much of Africa, land tenure in Zambia is a dual system of either communal or privately titled land (Mvunga 1980; Le Roy 1985; Firmin-Sellers and Sellers 1999; Benjaminsen and Lund 2003; Magana 2003). Titled land is owned, bought and sold by individuals who own registered leasehold titles based on common law, and are subjected to taxation. In contrast, the allocation and use of customary lands are administered by traditional authorities, chiefs and headmen on behalf of local communities. Titles do not exist, land taxes are not paid, and 'customary law' governs transfer and use of the land. The idea of customary law is a colonial invention and hardly represents the pure and original expression of native African cultures (Le Roy 1985).

After the Second World War, and particularly with the independence of the African nations up to the early 1980s, land reform emphasised redistribution to the peasants and landless farmers from state and large-scale private land. Market-based land reforms were introduced beginning in the late 1980s in many

countries, including Kenya, Uganda, Malawi and Zambia (Evers et al. 2005).

The government of the former ruling party of Zambia, called the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD), promoted land-market reform and market-based approaches to land reform. The government was consistently keen on economic liberalisation and introducing foreign capital to reduce poverty. This policy was driven by the international community to accelerate reduction of poverty in African nations.

The Zambian government enacted the '1995 Land Act' with the aim of stimulating investment and agricultural productivity. The donor countries claimed that the freehold land rights would result in the accumulation of capital and reduced poverty in the nation, and this led to the land reforms and legislation of the Land Act in Zambia (Brown 2005). This law was actually a condition for debt relief from the donor countries.

Land-market reforms significantly impacted Zambian communally held customary land and people's livelihoods when the 1995 Land Act was legislated. The Land Act legislation drew attention to the strengthened role and power of traditional authorities, particularly chiefs, because they acquired the power to allocate customary land to individuals and companies, including local elites and foreign investors. Seventy-three officially recognised ethnic groups exist in Zambia, and the social aspects of traditional authority vary among and within these groups.

The vast majority (94 per cent) of land in Zambia was classified as customary land at the time of Zambian independence (Brown 2005). As customary, land was to be gradually transferred to individually held land, the two major newspapers of Zambia, *the Post* and *Times of Zambia*, frequently focused on the problem of land grabbing by foreign investors, such as those involved in obtaining natural resources and in agribusiness. However, the term 'land grabbing' obscures the vast differences in the legality, structure and

outcomes of commercial land deals, and deflects attention from the roles of the domestic elites and governments as partners, intermediaries and beneficiaries in land deals (Hall 2011). In this chapter, we define ‘land grabbing’ as land acquisition that had a significant negative impact on the livelihoods of the residents.

Communal land tenure is the norm for the customary land of the Bemba society in northern Zambia, where we have conducted field research since 1993. The people believe that customary land belongs to the traditional authority of the Bemba chiefs and the kingdom. As part of everyday life in the rural communities people are generally considerate of their neighbours’ cultivation schedules and mindfully negotiate to avoid land problems. At times, they also try to solve customary land problems after consulting with the village headmen and chief. Land enclosures, land rights transfers, large-scale land acquisitions and social confusion have dominated this area since the 1995 Land Act was legislated. Some chiefs abused their authority and allocated pieces of customary land to members of local elites, enterprises, and to foreign investors without local consent. The roles of the chiefs and other traditional authorities in customary land administration have not been clarified in the academic literature. This chapter outlines changes in land administration in rural Zambia and explores the land administration roles of traditional authorities and the legal context for abuse when traditional authorities administered land following legislation of the 1995 Land Act.

4.2. Land Administration in Zambia

A dichotomy in land tenure exists between customary and privately titled land in Zambia. British colonial authorities set political and tenure distinctions between Crown Land areas as European settlements and the remaining customary land or ‘tribal area’. As Mamdani (1996) reported, rural African subjects are

governed by chiefs and customs, and live on spatially distinct communal land. In contrast, white settlers and urban dwelling citizens are governed by modern civil law and own or rent private property. It is important to review here the colonial administration and post-independence land tenure system transition described in the literature (Roberts 1976; Mvunga 1980; Brown 2005).

4.2.1. Colonial Administration

The two administrative units of North Eastern Rhodesia (NER) and Barotseland of North Western Rhodesia (NWR) before the 1911 amalgamation were the two sources of land titles in Northern Rhodesia before Zambian independence (Mvunga 1980). The NER administrative authority between 1899 and 1911 was the British South Africa Company (BSA). The BSA continued to administer NER from 1911 to 1924 when the British Crown assumed direct control of the territory. Thus, the BSA claimed ownership of the unalienated lands in NER as the administering authority and alienated the 'wastelands'. However, African farming practices, particularly shifting cultivation, require uncultivated land, and it is unclear whether this concept of wasteland extended to land not apparently in use or land genuinely outside human occupation. Land used by the African population was to be alienated only with the consent of the occupants and upon compensation by the BSA. This assurance to indigenous land occupants was contained in both the 1899 NER Order-in-Council and the 1911 Northern Rhodesia Order-in-Council. Therefore, Africans in NER could not be legally dispossessed of their land unless they willingly gave it up to the BSA, and the BSA was obligated to compensate them for any land.

The 1911 and 1924 Orders-in-Council retained the Crown's power to set up reserves (Mvunga 1980). Three reserve commissions surveyed three areas between 1924 and 1927 where white settlement had already taken place, and more was expected. These areas were near Fort Jameson (now Chipata) in the east, near

Abercon (now Mbala) in the north, and along the railway line. The BSA had not secured any land rights in NER, by Order-in-Council, treaty or concessions, and BSA grants were not regarded as a good source of title. Therefore, investments in such land were not secure. It was risky for white settlers to purchase land from the BSA. The colonial authorities had demarcated areas most appropriate for European settlement as Crown Land, as well as all land known to contain mineral resources (Brown 2005). The creation of Crown Land and Native Reserves by the 1928 Order-in-Council asserted Crown title to Crown Land. Therefore, the Crown owned land beginning in 1928 (Mvunga 1980).

The Native Reserves were duly demarcated between 1928 and 1930, and the African populations living near the reserves were forced to move into them. In total, about 60,000 people were moved, and several reserves were soon over-populated because much of the reserve land was unsuitable for cultivation (Roberts 1976). Traditional cultivation methods of the generally poor soils in Northern Rhodesia had depended on frequent mobility to wait for the soil to recover and trees to grow. However, such mobility was severely restricted where the people were confined to the reserves.

When the European settlers did not immigrate to the Crown Land as expected, the colonial government switched some parts of Crown Land into Trust Land and Native Reserve through the 1947 Trust Land Order-in-Council. This third land category, Trust Land, was added to the land tenure system of the territory. Restrictions were placed on title transfer of Trust Land and Native Reserve to Europeans or other non-indigenous residents. A five-year renewable right of occupancy was granted to 'non-natives' at the behest of the chief and the central government for pieces of land in the Native Reserve. The colonial government granted a right of occupancy for 99 years to Europeans and non-indigenous residents who owned Trust Land. The titles for land in the Native Reserves and Trust Land could not be transferred to private owners and remained

customary land.

Under the British indirect rule, the colonial authority permitted communal land tenure of customary land in the 'tribal area'. Colonial administrators tended to grant chiefs control over the use and allocation of land and natural resources in 'tribal areas'.

4.2.2. Kaunda Regime

Zambia became independent in 1964, and colonial legacy was inherited in the land tenure system (Mvunga 1980). The Kaunda regime was keen on economic socialism and nationalism. The basic categories of land remained the same, and Reserves and Trust Land continued to exist. Customary law continued as before and regulated interests and rights in these lands. In the early years of President Kaunda, all Crown Land was renamed State Land and was vested in the President rather than the British sovereignty.

The government maintained many aspects of British indirect rule, including the role of chiefs to allocate and control customary land. The Zambian constitution was amended in 1969 to allow acquisition of underdeveloped and unutilised land by the state. The 1975 Land Act declared that, 'All land in Zambia shall be vested absolutely in the President and shall be held by him in perpetuity for and on behalf of the people of Zambia'. This Act abolished all freehold estates and abridged all interests in land to statutory leases of 100 years duration. The state suppressed the land market through this legislation and sought to directly administer all leasehold land transfers. Land was deemed to have no intrinsic value and only buildings and agricultural infrastructure could be bought and sold. New legislation in 1985 restricted land transfer to foreigners, except presidentially certified investors and organisations.

4.2.3. The 1995 New Land Act

Land tenure reform originated with victory of the MMD in the

1991 multiparty election. The MMD launched a new government after the socialist administration of President Kaunda and promoted a market-based economy. The new government created a modern land law to guarantee private land ownership to fulfil their campaign promises. The aim was to efficiently transfer communal land to privately titled land by allotting some economic value to customary land so that development could take place in rural areas. Legislation of the new Land Act was not only a campaign promise but also an international condition for debt relief.

Three points are notable in the new 1995 Land Act. First, the new Land Act significantly strengthened the land ownership right of the title deed. Although land remained vested in the president, the 1995 Act upheld leaseholders' rights. Second, the Act eased restrictions on land ownership by foreign investors. Third, the Act changed the administration of customary land tenure, and Reserve and Trust Lands were concentrated into a new category of 'customary land'.

The 1995 Act recognised existing rights to customary land and eased land right acquisitions by outsiders, foreign investors and Zambian residents. Although the 1995 Land Act protected customary land rights, it was designed to open vast areas of customary land to investors under the discretion of traditional authorities. The social customs concerning traditional authority vary among the 73 ethnic groups in Zambia. Chiefs, village headmen and other traditional authorities play important roles in administering customary land. Their discretion could be used to allocate customary land rights to residents, members of local elites or foreign investors.

4.3. Land and Social Structure in Northern Zambia

4.3.1. Natural Environment and Research Area

The *miombo* woodland covers northern Zambia. The

predominant genera are *Brachystegia*, *Isoberlinia*, and *Julbernardia* in the family Caesalpiniaceae. The soil is nutritionally poor, with sandy topsoil. The Bemba people continue their unique shifting cultivation system, called *citemene*, in the *miombo* woodland. *Citemene* has a four-year rotation system: finger millet is harvested the first year, groundnuts and cowpea in the second year, cassava in the third year, and common beans in the fourth year. Each Bemba household opens a *citemene* field every year, and their diet is composed of the crops from the four fields as well as forest products, such as mushrooms, caterpillars and wild plants. The mean area of a *citemene* field is 0.2–1 ha. The Bemba frequently move their settlements seasonally and shift villages to seek and make use of optimum woodlands (Oyama 2005). The Bemba livelihood ethic rests on the sharing principle and is oriented towards food self-sufficiency (Kakeya et al. 2006).

A Japanese team has conducted academic research in M village and around the Northern Province of Zambia since 1983. M village is located about 30 km from the township. M village had 27 households with 116 residents in 2007, and 12 households were female-headed. M village is within the territory of one Bemba chief, with the title of Chief X. (We use provisional names for all chiefs, villages and companies unless historical).

The M villagers lead a subsistence life with strong reliance on the *citemene* system (Kakeya and Sugiyama 1985). Production of hybrid maize using chemical fertilisers spread rapidly throughout the study area beginning in 1986. By the 1990s, most villagers had devised a stable system wherein *citemene* cultivation was used for subsistence and coexisted with cash crop cultivation (Sugiyama 1987; Oyama and Takamura 2001; Kakeya et al. 2006). However, the national economic policy shifted strongly towards market liberalisation beginning in the mid-1990s, and maize cultivation ceased to be viable in the outlying rural areas. Moreover, the government Resettlement Project, which focused on resettling

large-scale commercial farmers, had reached full implementation near M village in 2000. A retired army soldier had enclosed a large area of land with a title deed from the Ministry of Land. Under these circumstances, the Bemba people held firmly to *citemene* cultivation as they engaged in a process of trial and error, seeking better opportunities for subsistence and cash income.

4.3.2. Bemba Chiefdom and Customary Land

The Bemba society formed a strong kingdom characterised by an outstanding military and active trade beginning in the early 20th century under British colonisation. Chiefdom has been the centralised political system with a paramount chief called *citimukulu*. The local chiefs and paramount chief belong to the *Benangandu* (crocodile) clan, and the throne is inherited on the matrilineal line. Bemba has a matrilineal society, as many ethnic groups do in Zambia. The Bemba kingdom was made one unit under the British indirect rule administration system, and the Bemba chiefs continued to carry out local administrative and judicial functions after Zambian independence in 1964. The Bemba people believe that the Bemba territory belongs to their chiefs, although there are some differences in opinions between individuals.

The Bemba chiefs traditionally rule the Bemba land (Richards 1939). The Bemba kingdom is divided into local chiefs' territories (*ichalo* pl. *ifyalo* in Bemba language). Each territory is as much a geographical unit as it is a political entity and has a definite boundary (Meebelo 1971). *Ichalo* connotes two things: (1) all Bemba land and (2) some part of the Bemba land under one local chief (*mufumu*). Local chiefs are subordinate to the paramount chief (*citimukulu*), but each chief has internal autonomy within his territory, and is not a satellite of the paramount chief. Local chiefs have jurisdiction over their own territory. Their territories are clearly demarcated with borders, dating back to the 17th century (Richards 1939). Bemba land is strongly tied to the chiefdom system. The

residents of Bemba land offer finger millet, beans, brews, chickens, goats and labour service to their local chief. The residents and their local chief form a loose economic unit.

The Bemba people have a strong identity and great pride as members of the Bemba ethnic group. They are aware of being subjects (*umukalochalo*) of the Bemba chief, although feelings and thoughts on this differ among generations and individuals. The land and natural resources, such as trees, wildlife, mushrooms, caterpillars, and all produce from the land, are recognised as property of the local chief and Bemba kingdom. The local chief holds control over his territory, and has the authority to permit founding of a new village, resettlement and land allocation for a new village. The residents cannot maintain their livelihood, open a *citemene* field, cut a tree or build a house without permission from their chief.

Bemba villages are self-supporting, and the power of Bemba chiefs seldom relates to actual everyday life, such as *citemene* cultivation, maize farming, collecting mushrooms or producing charcoal. Although land belongs to the local chief, the chief never pursues self-interest by altering the land tenure system, selling land rights to outsiders or depriving residents of their land rights (Richards 1939). Granting land use rights and allocating land to new migrants is entrusted to discussions between village headmen and villagers.

4.4. Land Reform and Social Confusion

After the 1995 new Land Act legislation, the number of title deeds to customary land increased remarkably. Despite the lack of official data, about 2,000 conversions occurred, which was the highest number the Ministry of Land could process annually (Brown 2005). We now explore the actual impact of land reform on rural society.

4.4.1. Procedures for Acquiring Land Rights in Customary Land

There were several ways to acquire Bemba customary land rights but none of them were systematic (Moore and Vaughan 1994). The authorities that decided land rights were village headmen, chiefs, the District Council and the Ministry of Land. The applicants needed the consent of traditional authorities, particularly chiefs, to obtain land rights under the new 1995 Land Act.

There were main four procedures for acquiring land rights on Chief X's territory in 2008. First, an applicant could ask a village headman whether he could obtain land rights. If it was accepted, the applicant and the village headman visited the chief's palace and offered the chief some tribute. Upon approval from the chief, the applicant took an approval letter from the chief to the District Council and applied for the title deed in front of the District Council and Ministry of Land.

Second, an applicant could visit the chief directly, not through the village headman, and receive approval from the chief to apply for acquiring land at the District Council and Ministry of Land to obtain the title deed.

Third, the applicant could fill out the Land Allocation Form, go to the village headman and visit the chief with the headman. The chief holds the administrative power over his territory and issues the original Land Allocation Form for his territory. The form, unlike the title deed, does not allow the owner to sell or buy land, but allows the land right holder's family to inherit the land after the death of the owner of the form. This third procedure was the easiest and most common way for urban residents to obtain customary land, because applicants did not have to apply to the District Council and Ministry of Land, where the paperwork was much more complex.

The fourth way was for the applicant to apply directly to the Ministry of Land, not through the village headman, the chief or District Council, to obtain the title deed from the Ministry. Only

certain people, such as politicians, retired soldiers and officials were permitted to use this procedure.

In Zambia, nepotism is recognised among personal relationships in the privileged classes through ethnic and personal connections. Nepotism breeds graft and corruption (Szeftel 1983). In all of the procedures described above, applicants seeking approval for land rights from the headman, chief or government officials paid tribute for their facilities. These tributes were seen as bribes. There have been dark rumours that have spread widely concerning land right acquisition in the rural communities.

4.4.2. Small-Scale Land Enclosure by Individuals

The Land Allocation Form was issued under the third procedure described above by the chief after the village headman approved the land allocation. In Chief X's territory (when the chief was Mr. KL), applicants paid 190,000 kwacha (60 US dollars in 2008) to the chief and received exactly 75 ha land. The applicants preferred the Land Allocation Form to a title deed because of the paperwork, heavy cost and troublesome negotiations with the officials in Northern Province and Lusaka.

In NG village, 15 km from the nearest township, town residents who were businessmen and salaried workers obtained Land Allocation Forms from the chief. Then, the workers started cultivating the land. There was a rumour that the NG village headman received cash from applicants for the Land Allocation Forms. The village headman had negotiated with the applicants secretly, and most of the villagers were not aware of the land allocation. They only understood the situation immediately after the town residents secured the Land Allocation Form and cultivated the new farmland. The villagers did not object to their chief and were patient with the land allocation in the village, although they were angry and wanted to resist the situation.

The people in M village could not obtain the Land Allocation

Form because of their lack of forwardness and lack of money, and because they did not have any trouble over land among themselves. However, their situation began to deteriorate. A resettlement scheme of the Zambian government was launched in the late 1990s, and vast land north of the village was enclosed when Mr. KP was Chief X. Mr. KP as Chief X received a request from the government for future regional development. A retired soldier privately acquired a title deed from the Ministry of Land without notifying Mr. KP as Chief X or the villagers. A 1,250 ha southern mature forest, suitable for opening *citemene* fields was enclosed.

4.4.3. *Livelihood Changes Due to Land Enclosure*

A government resettlement project was launched in the mid-1990s near M village, and a retired soldier obtained a title deed and enclosed the forest. Due to this land enclosure, M villagers were compelled to open *miombo* woodlands near the village, despite insufficient fallow periods. The M villagers chose to stay in the same place and continue cultivating *citemene* in the limited nearby *miombo* woodlands. In the time frame 1994–1997, the villagers opened some *citemene* fields 3–4 km (mean, 3.3 km) away from the village, and then some only 1–2 km (mean, 1.6 km) during 2002–2003. Only nine households achieved food self-sufficiency by farming in 2003, while 16 households could not. The food security of M village became threatened due to a land shortage.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the villagers would say that the twigs and branches that they collected from the woods to burn in a pile when preparing a *citemene* field were all waist-high, and had grown tall enough to create a good fire and, hence, a good crop yield. They emphasised that a stronger fire led to a better crop harvest. Up until 1998, the research team calculated a mean of 2.7 t/ha of finger millet harvest from the *citemene* fields. With this mean yield, we could assume that nine ares of *citemene* field per one adult male would allow self-sufficiency. However, after 1999, it was no longer

possible to collect enough wood to burn, because this resource was scarce due to restricted land access and roadside forest degradation. The branches and twigs collected in 2007 were only as high as their knees because the forest was inaccessible and had not recovered. They could not collect enough wood to prepare the *citemene* fields, and the fields became covered with weeds. The poor crop yield prevented food sufficiency, even when the area of the villagers' fields remained at nine ares of *citemene* fields per one adult male.

Some villagers soon realised that their dependence on *citemene* was no longer sustainable, and looked for other farming methods. The villagers regarded the supply of chemical fertiliser from the government as unreliable, and they emphasised the importance of indigenous farming methods that required no agricultural inputs. Some villagers prepared charcoal to sell to truck drivers to buy food staples. In 1996, one M villager said that, 'Selling charcoal is the work of the poor who suffer from food shortages'. The 2007 land enclosure restricted land use by the village residents. Making charcoal became a common means to obtain cash to buy food staples and commodities and pay school expenses for their children.

We will now examine the diet of one household, Household M, headed by a woman taking care of her six unmarried children. She opened *citemene* fields with support from her son and nephew, her elder brother's son. They cut the trees for her *citemene*, and she cut up the felled trees with a hand axe. She opened around 25 ares of *citemene* fields during 2005–2007. She said that the trees to supply the twigs and branches to burn and prepare the *citemene* fields were very limited, and that the inadequate crop yield was due to insufficient burning. She could not buy chemical fertiliser. She cultivated sweet potato, maize, cassava and beans in her 25 ares field without any chemical fertiliser. (The fields without chemical fertiliser were called *ibala*.) Although yield was relatively poor, the female head of Household M emphasised the importance of this *ibala* field for their everyday meals.

According to the meal log for Household M (202 days: 13 March–30 September 2006), the family ate lunch and dinner regularly (a total of 404 meals). Two meals per day are common in Bemba agrarian village life. Our study was conducted during the harvest season, and the villagers enjoyed *ubwali*, their staple porridge dish, 243 times, (mean, 1.20 times/day) during the study period. Cassava was used as the main ingredient in *ubwali* porridge harvested in the *cifwani* during the rainy season (November–March), which was the second year in the *citemene* field. In April, the villagers started harvesting maize from *ibala* and finger millet from *ubukula*, which was from a first year *citemene* field. The *ubwali* porridge was made mainly with finger millet and maize during the dry season. Maize and cassava were the staple crops cooked to make *ubwali*, but maize and cassava were simply boiled for lunch and dinner during the rainy season. Maize and finger millet ran out in September, and the woman heading the household requested some food staples from her brothers. She went to her brother's crop field with his wife for some cassava. She needed to manage the hungry season, a long period from September to April.

It was common for the villagers to eat *ubwali* finger millet porridge for lunch and dinner during the 1990s. Finger millet yield has decreased since 2000 because an insufficient number of *citemene* fields have been opened, due to a land shortage. Even during the harvest season, they usually had *ubwali* porridge only once daily, and usually ate sweet potato, pumpkin, edible gourd and groundnuts for their other meals.

A woman born in 1949 visited the village headman's house one night at the end of September 2004. She claimed that she was hungry, and that she could not open enough *citemene* fields for her livelihood. She suffered low crop yield due to a lack of twigs and branches to burn for the *citemene*. She said that currently she faced a food shortage every year, and that life was hard. She could not depend on her relatives, because they had no extra food to share.

The headman sat in a chair near the fire and listened to her calmly with his wife. The woman revealed that she would move to a settler's plot in the government resettlement scheme and engage in piecework jobs for longer than six months at a time for cash income. The next morning, around 7:00 am, she carried a small backpack on her back and set out from the village with her niece.

According to interviews with the villagers, their diet had worsened since 2000. Because of the restricted land use, they could not open *citemene* fields as needed nor harvest enough finger millet, maize and cassava. They ate boiled pumpkin and edible gourds in mid-February, maize in March, and finger millet, groundnuts and cowpeas from May onwards, as their diet. They started harvesting sweet potato in June and cassava in October. They had two hungry seasons based on the seasonality of the crop harvest: August–September, and the end of December to early February. During these times, they were hungry (*insala* in Bemba language). Hunger issues were more severe for the female heads of households, because they lacked male labour.

Their quality of life deteriorated with no food self-sufficiency or cash income. The elderly people (>50 years) missed the traditional beer made of finger millet. Some said they would never again open *citemene* fields nor eat *ubwali* made with finger millet.

4.5. Abuses in Land Administration by Chiefs

4.5.1. Large-Scale Land Enclosure by Company P

Chief Y of another ethnic group, whose territory neighbours that of Bemba Chief X (Mr. CY), announced a foreign company operation and land enclosure would commence in September 2005. Chief Y held an ethnic festival and had invited a large-scale oil palm plantation owner. The investor was cooking oil Company P. Company P is a joint investment company with a foreign investor and with its main office in Lusaka. Company P produces cooking

oil, but also engages in drilling crude oil and oil refining. The company officers asked Chiefs X and Y, respectively, for 12,500 ha each (total, 25,000 ha) under their chieftaincy. In return, Company P was ready to provide a vehicle for private use by all chiefs and 60,000,000 kwacha (20,000 USD) for community development.

Chief X had been using a wheelchair all his life because of a serious illness, and he was very glad to hear the offer from Company P. He fully approved the transfer of land in his territory to Company P. In contrast, Chief Y owned private vehicles, and requested the equivalent value of a vehicle in cash. Chief Y officially announced construction of an oil palm plantation to the public, but Chief X never did. Villages and cultivated fields were already established in the 25,000 ha of land. The residents worried about their lives and whether Company P would evict the residents and requisition their land.

Chief X appointed three village headmen as sub-chiefs and 10 village headmen as senior advisory members to assist the local administration. One sub-chief, Mr. BE, knew of the offer from Company P, but said that he could never object to the decision of the chief. One advisory member, Mr. KB, was unaware of the offer from Company P, but said that he could not oppose the chief, even had he received information about company P's offer.

The minister of the Ministry of Land called the two chiefs to the capital city of Lusaka and held a meeting in February 2006. Chief X sent one of his sub-chiefs, Mr. BE, to the meeting because he became seriously ill and could not travel to Lusaka. Company P wanted to acquire the title deed for 25,000 ha of land in the territories of the chiefs, but the minister disapproved of the offer because the land area was too great and the residents would suffer a land shortage. The minister allowed Company P the land use right for 10,000 ha instead. Company P persisted in asking for a title deed for private land ownership of the original 25,000 ha; however, the negotiations never developed further, and the meeting failed to

reach an agreement.

After the meeting, Company P continued to construct the oil palm plantation and they applied for the title deed under a new name, Company M, after Chief Y's real name. The minister did not accept this application and refused to issue the title deed. Company M observed the presidential and general election results in September 2006, and seemed to forego receiving the title deed because the MMD ruling party won the election. This negotiation was kept secret by the people concerned, including Chief X, Company P and the Ministry of Land. None of the residents, sub-chiefs or advisory members understood the situation.

The chief and four members of the advisory board had passed away, one after another, by 2011. The causes of their deaths were obscure. Death under these circumstances was considered a punishment for abusing power in this village community; in this case the abuse of power was selling the territory to an outside company through the Land Allocation Form without informing the people. For no apparent reason, the chief and his advisory members had also caught and killed many pastured goats and sheep that belonged to the people. The people believed that 'bad activities' may have caused their death, and that the people's anger had led to the death of the chief.

Company P received subsidiary capital from the largest agricultural enterprise in Zambia and changed the company name to Company Z. Company Z acquired more suitable land for constructing an oil palm plantation near a lake in Chief Y's territory, and built a large-scale palm operation with a centre pivot irrigation system, greenhouses for nurseries, apartment houses for workers and airport facilities.

4.5.2. People's Discontent and the New Chief

After Chief X passed away in 2007 due to a serious illness, Mr. KL assumed the position of local chief in 2008. Mr. KL was not

fully qualified to be a chief, but neither was former Chief X. In Bemba society, the successor to a chief must be from the matrilineal line of the crocodile clan, and former Chief X and Mr. KL were sons of the chiefs from the patrilineal line. Strictly speaking, they did not belong to the crocodile clan, according to the interpretation of Bemba society. But both had administrated their territories as if they were approved chiefs. The residents acknowledged their authority (*isambu*) as chiefs to a certain extent, although neither of the chiefs was fully qualified. The residents did not object openly to Mr. KL, but they did not participate in his inaugural ceremony, as a way of showing their disapproval. The other chiefs did not recognise Mr. KL as a formal chief either, and no one took part in the ceremony.

Mr. KL was a businessman who owned a bakery shop, bar and guesthouse in the township. After the death of former Chief X, Mr. KL introduced himself as the new Chief X. Mr. KL received advice from influential people, and paved the way for issuing the Land Allocation Form because former Chief X had been used to give the Land Allocation Form to applicants himself. Mr. KL founded a board by the name of the CS Group, which comprised influential people in the territory. The CS Group was named after the very first Chief X, who had the post in 1914. The CS Group was composed of eight committee members and 11 advisory members. The members were called *chilolo* in Bemba. The chairman of the *chilolo* was the new Chief X, Mr. KL. The CS Group received the application for land right acquisition and issued the Land Allocation Form to applicants residing in and outside the territory. The CS Group examined the actual land use carefully and interviewed the residents around the planned area. The authority of the chief became limited, but his will was strongly reflected in the decision to issue the Land Allocation Form. After Mr. KL became the new chief, Land Allocation Forms continued to be issued, and conflicts arose between the residents and the applicants.

Mr. KL was killed in an automobile accident in December 2009 while travelling to Eastern Province to attend the ethnic festival as a Bemba Chief. On the way, his car overtook a long truck and crashed head-on with an oncoming vehicle; thus, both unqualified chiefs, former Chief X and Mr. KL, passed away. Mr. KL was killed in a car crash, and former Chief X died of a serious illness.

Mr. CB became the newest Chief X in 2010. He was fully qualified as a descendent along a matrilineal line of the crocodile clan. Mr. CB was a high school teacher in Lusaka but retired in 2010. His inaugural ceremony was well attended, and warmly welcomed by the people and other chiefs. The Bemba chiefs who were invited and other ethnic group chiefs said in their speeches that ‘the Chief X’s territory is vast, with abundant trees and natural resources. If the Chief sells land to outsiders, how would the people live? People are suffering from a land shortage’. The newest Chief X, Mr. CB, declared that he would never allocate land to outsiders as a safety precaution. The residents who heard the speech were very pleased and shouted out with joy.

4.6. Conclusion: Land Allocation and the Chief’s Role

We call attention to three points concerning customary land under the 1995 Land Act in Zambia. First, the 1995 Land Act positively stimulated the market economy mechanism involving customary land in Zambia. People strongly recognised the economic value of their customary land. Allocation of customary land threatened sustainability of the *citemene* system and the residents’ quality of life. Outside investors and local elite could acquire land from traditional authorities under the 1995 Land Act. Ault and Rutman (1993) analysed changes to the rights to customary land in 20th century East and Southern Africa. When land rights had no monetary value, communal property right structures, the local legal system and other institutions permitted

cultivators to efficiently use resources for agricultural production. The body of African customary law for the period promoted efficient use of resources, as the marginal social benefit and marginal private benefit from the resource allocation converged. These legal institutions defined individuals' rights to land comprehensively, as required to promote efficient use of arable land when land became scarce. However, communal land tenure systems were gradually overtaken by individual rights that permitted disposal of pieces of land as the individual saw fit, without consulting local authorities.

As Chu (2013) reported, not all large-scale farmland acquisitions could be called 'land grabbing'. This term obscures some important distinctions and nuances in land acquisitions. These differences are important when considering the ways in which land acquisition can have both positive and negative impacts on local livelihoods. Land acquisitions create job opportunities and promote welfare and cash income for residents, and could be regarded as promoting regional development.

However, because of land acquisitions by outsiders, some residents had lost their means to make a living, and they could not maintain their livelihood without receiving compensation. In these cases, land acquisition was called land grabbing. We recognised social differences between the local town elite and the local people on customary land.

Second, the 1995 Land Act strengthened the role and power of the chiefs in the administration and jurisdiction towards various groups of people. The chiefs had the power to allocate land to individuals, including outside investors, because they could issue the Land Allocation Form and allocate the land. Originally, the Bemba people contributed food and labour services to the chiefs, and the chiefs protected the lives of the people. There was reciprocity between the Bemba chief and the people (Richards 1939).

However, some chiefs abused their authority and allocated the

rights of their territory to outside individuals and foreign investors. The Bemba people were patient, although they were angry and discontented with such land allocation and their deteriorating living standards. The Bemba people believed that a chief should take care of the people and help them to live peaceful and healthy lives in his territory. Self-interest and oppression of residents by the chiefs were unacceptable to the people, and indicated a lack of good sense and judicious behaviour (*umutembo*). The Bemba villagers in Chief X's territory avoided mentioning and interpreting the causes of death of successive chiefs, but some of them warned against greediness and selfishness in seeking their own self-interest. The Bemba chief had absolute power over his territory and subjects, but people's anger could affect his position, especially if the chief's administration worsened the people's living standards. Even if the Bemba villagers disapproved of the chief during his tenure, the people did not stay angry after his death. Most people emphasised the importance of *uluse*, forgiveness, not *kufolwa*, anger. They believe that the spirits (*imipashi*) of chiefs protect the territory and take care of the people's lives.

The people expect a new chief's administration to improve their situation. A new chief is expected to judge the situation with Bemba common sense (*umutembo*), eliminate the problem (*kubalula*), and start a new administration (*kuteka*) after familiarising himself with the administrative history of the territory and the people's lives, based on his career and background.

Third, the local administration is strongly dependent on the chief's character. This leads to local conflicts over land and land allocation, conflicts that could threaten the living standards of the people. At the same time, a new chief can change the administration drastically and improve the situation. The Bemba people are patient and do not object to or resist their chief openly, even if they are confused and angry because of his actions.

The people believe in retribution for bad behaviour. Bad

behaviours invite anger, and anger can kill a man, even a chief. The anger of the people changed the attitude of the chief's administration. The anger disappeared in time, and then the people emphasised the importance of forgiveness, *uluse*. The Bemba people tend to avoid serious, open conflicts through their forgiveness and their consistent respect for their chiefs.

The chiefs and other traditional authority members have conventionally prioritised subjects living on customary land when adjudicating land acquisition by outsiders and prevented them from acquiring land. Examining the social impacts of large-scale land acquisition by the private sector and having the ability to overrule a chief's decisions when issuing title deeds is an important role of central government. The government can prevent land problems and protect the local people's livelihoods.

It is critical to carefully consider the employment, cash income, and welfare of the residents for future social development of the territory. If the traditional authority chooses to allocate away pieces of customary land, they should arrange for negotiations between residents and investors to provide cash compensation for land loss, because the local people will have to acquire new livelihoods, which takes a long time.

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History as an African Potential: Namibia, Southern Africa and East Asia in Historical Connectedness and Contemporaneousness

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5.1. Introduction

In September 1989, on the eve of the constitutional election, when I visited the ‘last colony of Africa’,¹ tricoloured blue-red-green flags fluttering atop roofs of countless rows of shacks created an overwhelming scene at the large township, Katutura, on the outskirts of the capital of Namibia, Windhoek. Swarms of UNTAG² men, busy arranging for the ‘free and fair’ election, the biggest event leading to independence, were everywhere across the country. The high spirits of the people in anticipation of peace and freedom were more than visible, even to the eyes of a first-time visitor from a Far Eastern country. It was a euphoric moment.

What has become of that euphoria after a quarter century and what could we gather from the new-born country’s pursuit to overcome its colonial and apartheid past?

Namibia is generally seen as one of the few fortunate countries in Africa in terms of state governance and prevention or absence of conflict. The Ibrahim Index of African Governance, for instance, which ranks African countries by measuring ‘safety and rule of law’, ‘participation and human rights’, ‘sustainable economic opportunity’, and ‘human development’, placed Namibia in fifth place in 2015, following South Africa in fourth.³ The latest list of African

countries in which the Human Rights Watch (HRW) finds matters of concern, does not name Namibia.⁴

In economic terms, however, Namibia counts among the most unequal countries in Africa and worldwide. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Report of 2009, the ratio of the average income of the richest 10 per cent to that of the poorest 10 per cent in Namibia is 106.6, by far number one in the world, while the Gini index for 2005–2013, given in the same 2015 report, was 61.3, surpassed only by South Africa (65.0) and the Comoros (64.3).⁵

These indices and figures are not the real concern of this chapter however, as I want to be careful about simplified universalistic thinking. At the same time, although they convey little about personal and direct violence, they help us to gain some insight into the gravity of structural and indirect violence.⁶

In his latest book, Henning Melber, a committed expert on the political economy of Namibia, is sceptical or almost desperate about the state of democracy in the country, and seeks to offer an in-depth understanding of the intensifying authoritarianism of both SWAPO⁷ since its change from a liberation organisation to the ruling party of the independent state and that of its leaders, the first and former president Sam Nujoma among others, followed by ever increasing economic inequality among the population (Melber 2015). His exhaustive description exposes that the allegedly stable country is packed with many patterns of insecurity and is far from being free of direct violence in the forms of ‘alarmingly high rates of suicide, rape and murder, domestic violence, child abuse and other forms of aggression, such as so-called passion killing (where gender-based violence erupts by the jealous or estranged lover first killing the woman and then himself)’ (Melber 2015, p. 156) as a daily occurrence among ordinary people, to say nothing of the incidence

of indirect violence embodied in the extremely high rate of unemployment and HIV/AIDS infection. Melber's picture differs markedly from the impressions offered by the Ibrahim Index and HRW's judgment.

Military involvement too, which generally is considered missing, exists. The intervention in 1998–2002 in the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in support of Kabila, along with Angola and Zimbabwe, was pushed ahead against the non-intervention principles of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and was criticised heavily by the opposition at home. The ambiguous attitude of the SWAPO government toward the principle of non-intervention allowed the Angolan military in their war with the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) to cross the border in 1999–2000 long after the termination of the entanglement of the Angolan civil war and the war of liberation in Namibia. In the case of the 'Caprivi' conflict,⁸ military force was deployed against civilians at home. Of the adherents to secessionism some were killed, more than a hundred of the accused are still behind bars and approximately 2,500 were exiled.

The catalogue of direct and indirect violence tempts us to draw a more or less negative picture of the young African state, and this is not entirely unfounded. However, the purpose of this chapter is not to endorse this view, but to discover 'potentials' of the country to resist the authoritarian disposition as well as the centralising tendency of the state power and to deconstruct the framework of history understanding imposed by colonialism as well as to envisage an alternative national history, viewing current conflicts from a broader and longer historical perspective.

In the first half of this chapter (Sections 2 and 3), the legacies of German and South African colonialisms in the country will be

discussed. To begin with, the land issue as a most serious and historically rooted conflict and structural violence in postcolonial Namibia will be outlined from the point of view of the duality of the colonial past, which created a unique ethno-regional political structure. That is followed by a section that examines the controversy over colonial reparations that have developed into a national concern. In the evolving controversy, one can find a moment that can deconstruct the historical picture imposed by colonialism and conceive an alternative, non-state-centred, non-Eurocentric one, which has the potential for conflict resolution. Subsequent to this is a bridging section (Section 4) that discusses the meaning of national history in this country today. Then a preliminary response from a Japanese historian to the Namibian/African potential for rewriting history is presented in two sections (Sections 5 and 6), that attempt to find elements for a connected history of Africa and East Asia, especially in terms of colonial violence. This represents a search for a different kind of world history based on national histories that are open to and have implications for the outside world, and vice versa. The concluding section reflects on the potential of historical thinking as a medium for conflict resolution.

Unlike regular academic writings, the sections are neither empirical nor substantiating, and are rather sketchy. With two halves of the chapter, which may seem sparsely related, however, it is intended to show an alternative way of viewing the history of Africa – in this case of Namibia – from a distant place so as to evoke a productive dialogue about history as a potential for conflict resolution.

5.2. The Legacy of Dual Colonialism in Namibia (1)

Namibia achieved independence on 21 March 1990, three decades after the 'Year of Africa'. Considering that the country's war of liberation, along with the Angolan civil war, was inseparable from the Cold War, its independence in the year 1990 was logical, but this meant that, unlike other African nations that had more options, independent Namibia at its inception was destined to follow the demands of the West, particularly of the club called the 'Western Contact Group (France, UK, USA, Canada, West Germany)'. That left Namibia no choice but a parliamentary democracy and a capitalist market economy. The presence of UNTAG, as mentioned in the introduction, was symbolic of that. Moreover, what begs attention here is that this was the time when there was a strong trend in the global economy toward neoliberalism. SWAPO, which had previously led the liberation struggle as a revolutionary organisation, emerged as the ruling party, becoming the key actor deciding and executing policies in those directions. The blue-red-green colours symbolising SWAPO now had become the colours of the nation's flag.

The land reform policy to overcome the extreme disparities in land ownership and usage, after all the most substantial legacy of colonial and apartheid rule, could only be conceived in this prescribed direction. The result is that a quarter of a century after independence, the living conditions have remained largely unchanged for the majority of Africans, who either subsist on communal land or are employed as farm workers or industrial workers, and the consequent gap in wealth based on land ownership has further widened (Werner 2010).

The reality of land reform in Namibia – how the tempo of land redistribution is slow, how the disparities in landownership have

been unchanged or even widening, how the people on the communal land are expected by the state to turn to commercial farmers, and so on –, is described in detail in studies by Sidney L. Harring, Willem Odendaal, Wolfgang Werner and others (Werner 2001; Harring and Odendaal 2007; Harring and Odendaal 2008; Werner and Odendaal 2010). Here, I would like to focus on a single point that lies at the root of this country's land question and embodies an important characteristic of it: the retention of the division between the two categories of land, 'commercial land' and 'communal land', as incarnated respectively in two pieces of legislation, the Agricultural (Commercial) Land Reform Act (1995) and the Communal Land Reform Act (2002). In order to understand the ethno-regional structure, which underlies the political and economic conflicts facing Namibia today, and its transformation, it is important to look into the historical processes that engendered these two land categories.

Needless to say, 'commercial land' refers to the farms owned by whites during the apartheid era, while 'communal land' refers to the homelands for 'non-whites'. The 1964 Odendaal Plan, which was the Namibian rendition of the 'Bantustan' policy, divided up about half of the country's landmass (excluding the nature reserves) into 10 'homelands' that were assigned to each of the various African and 'coloured' ethnic groups. It was, however, not a new creation but the culmination of the long history of policies directed to restrict the African people's free movement and to confine them in designated areas.⁹ The origins of these policies are visible in the suppression of the 1904–08 war of resistance under German colonial rule and its aftermath. The groups that carried out the resistance, the Herero and some groups of the Nama, both of which were pastoralists, were totally dispossessed of their land and cattle, and many other peoples were forced to live on reserves,

which had been set up by the onset of World War I.

However, the land policy of establishing reserves in German Southwest Africa (GSWA; present-day Namibia), which bore resemblance to those practised in surrounding British colonies as well, had yet another dimension. In 1906, in the midst of the war, the colonial government introduced a policy that prohibited access to Ovamboland in the north by anyone other than the ‘indigenous tribes of the land’,¹⁰ and the following year, a conceptual borderline was drawn for that purpose. The territory south of the line, where the majority of the land was secured for the German settlers and concession companies, was named ‘Police Zone’ and put under control of the colonial authority. Under this policy, the administration of the northern side was not pursued, where the various polities of the Ovambo and other agro-pastoralist groups as well as hunter-gatherers were living.

The precedent for the line that divided the northern territory from the central and southern regions was the cordon set up at the time of the 1896–98 rinderpest (cattle plague) pandemic (Miescher 2012). While it is widely acknowledged that this pandemic was a decisive turning point in the establishment of colonial rule in Southern Africa (Van Onselen 1972; Phoofole 1993), in GSWA, through the drawing of a dividing line, which soon evolved from a restriction on the movement of livestock to a restriction on the movement of people, a regionally structured colonial rule, that divided the territory politically, economically and socially, emerged. This line, which separated the area occupied by settlers from others, was later termed the ‘red line’ under South African rule (Miescher 2012, pp. 97–100). The northern side of the line experienced its first substantial colonial oppression in the form of indirect rule by South Africa, starting during World War I, and assumed an important status as a reservoir of migrant workers, which had already begun

under German rule (Hayes et al. 1998, pp. 7–12).

What is important to note is that there were disparities in the natural environments, which in turn created corresponding differences in the livelihoods of the residents, and during the pre-colonial era, those disparities served as the backbone of trade between different regions and mutual support for one another in times of famine or drought and were not the reason to divide one region from another. Thus, the divide that emerged under German colonialism, which subsequently continued under South African administration, was not environmental or physical but all the more, entirely epistemological and therefore political in nature (Eirola 1992). It was in this northern area that the liberation struggle was most heavily fought, led by SWAPO, which had been organised by migrant labourers from Ovamboland. It was also for this reason that the north was conceptualised by the colonial authority as the ‘land of the Ovambo’, in spite of the fact that there were various other groups besides the Ovambos, including hunter-gatherers.

As described above, in this country, the conceptual dichotomy between communal land and commercial land is inextricably tied to the history of the territory’s ethno-regional divide. In addition, this binary relation also signifies the disparity in the people’s colonial experience in terms of whether or not they had experienced German rule prior to South African control. These binaries might be understood as a Namibian variant of what Mamdani discusses as essence of historiography produced under ‘indirect rule’. He argues that there are two kinds of colonial histories: the grand narrative of colonialism written within the frame of race and its micro-histories within the frame of ‘tribe’ and that postcolonial states have inherited this divide in their national histories (Mamdani 2012). In case of Namibia the binary frame is doubled in a sense that the northern part of the country was separated and put under indirect

rule while the other parts, lumped together as ‘Police Zone’, were not only assigned to the settlers, but contained numerous small ‘native reserves’ inside. This was the frame of colonial administration, has been that of history writing and is the presupposition of land reform today, just as is shown by Mamdani regarding the history of Sudan, from the Mahdiyya to present-day Darfur, where ‘Britain joined a racialized historiography to a tribalized administration, land tenure, and dispute settlement’ (Mamdani 2012, p. 72).

5.3. The Legacy of Dual Colonialism in Namibia (2)

Along with the binary frame of land reform and the ethno-regional dichotomy as its historical backdrop, another issue, which has common basis to reconsider how to approach national history, is the demand for reparations, by some Hereros.¹¹ That is to say, that the demand of reparations for damages incurred in the 1904–08 colonial war, was appealed after the country gained independence and widely debated from the onset of the 2000s when the claim was brought before the court.

On the eve of independence, Chief K. Riruako of the Herero began to stake his people’s claim, demanding reparations from the German government and corporations for the damages suffered as a result of the massacre of the Herero during the 1904–08 war, the negative impact of which is said to continue to be felt even today. The German government took the stance that while they admitted having a ‘special historical responsibility’ and a ‘moral responsibility’, they did not bear any legal responsibility since ‘Germany’s actions did not violate international law at that time’ and their stance has basically remained unchanged through to the present. The Namibian government, for their part, took the stance that ‘the

Herero are not the only ones who suffered damages from colonial rule', that it 'does not support the action of any specific group' and that 'even if reparations could be claimed, it must be done through the government', and they criticised the movement led by Riruako as promoting 'tribalism'. Given the country's politicised ethno-regional structure and different colonial experience of the people, it was no coincidence that the reparation claim was raised by Riruako, as the leader of the Hereros at the dawn of independence and not prior to it.

During the apartheid era, Riruako once held the position of the representative of the Hereroland as a 'homeland' and the leader of the National Unity Democratic Organisation (NUDO) (Pütz et al. 1990, pp. 201–2), a central figure among various organisations that comprised the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA), formed by South Africa with the objective of developing a resistance force against SWAPO as the mainstream liberation organisation. South Africa felt the need to suppress SWAPO, whose stronghold was among the Ovambo people, and for this reason they assigned that political role to the Herero. After independence, the political ethnic map intentionally created by the apartheid regime was passed on to the map of partisan politics, SWAPO versus DTA, and to the extent that Riruako even became a DTA member of parliament.¹² Underlying the cool response by the Namibian government to the reparation claims against Germany was the history of *divide et impera* policy of apartheid.

In 2004, as the reparation movement reached an apex with the 100th anniversary of the war,¹³ a movement emerged among those who were dissatisfied with Riruako's chieftaincy,¹⁴ as well as those Herero who were politically aligned with SWAPO and called for negotiations with Germany based on 'dialogue'.¹⁵ The Nama and Damara people also asserted their claim to damages incurred during

the war, and to this effect some organisations were created for that purpose.¹⁶ The unanimous adoption of the motion submitted before Parliament by Riruako in October 2006 to claim ‘reparations from Germany for the Herero genocide’, which also mentioned the damages suffered by the Nama and others in addition to the Herero, symbolised this shift (*Namibian*, 27 October 2006). The shift indicates on the one hand that the reparation claim had lost its characteristics as Riruako’s ethnic mobilisation of the Herero, or the self-assertion of the opposition party under the SWAPO government, and was instead becoming a platform that brought together people from various ethnic and political affiliations.

The class-action suit brought in 2001 in the United States by Riruako and his supporters ended up being dismissed in 2007 due to the parties’ lack of legal standing, however, the suit garnered attention from the international community owing to its being the first case where colonial crimes had ever been addressed in a courtroom. As sympathy from the outside world spread for the movement of Riruako, the Namibian government’s reluctant stance gradually decreased and it reinterpreted the damage wrought by the 1904–08 war as damages to the ‘Namibian nation’.

In fact, in 2007, when the German government tried to resolve the issue by offering a 20 million euro fund, it was the Namibian government, a self-appointed spokesperson for the victims, who agreed to receive those funds, without involvement of the people who had been engaged in the reparation movement.¹⁷

The tensions between the activists and the government can also be found in the issue of the return of human remains from Germany, which has been one focal point of the reparation claim movement since the setback in the lawsuit. At the time of the 1904–08 war, a large number of skulls and skeletal remains were brought to Germany in the name of ‘scientific research’, just as was done by

other imperial powers of the day. One destination was the Charité hospital in Berlin, whose museum houses more than 9,000 skulls from around the world in its collection even to this day. Against the backdrop of the spate of demands by several groups described above, the Namibian government requested the return of the remains, and in September 2011, the museum returned 20 skulls that had clearly been transferred during the war in question.¹⁸ Subsequently, Charité returned 21 skulls and skeletons in 2013, and in 2014, another 14 skulls were returned through the University of Freiburg.¹⁹

There are two points worth noting in regard to the repatriation of human remains. First, the remains that were returned by Charité in 2013 included those acquired in time periods other than the 1904–08 war, and they included not only the remains of Herero and Nama people, but also Damara, San and even Ovambo people. In addition, with regards to the inventory from the University of Freiburg, it was revealed that there was a close connection between the skulls transferred at the time of the 1904–08 war and the collection of the notorious anthropologist Eugen Fischer. In 1908, or in other words, after the 1904–08 war had ended, Fischer went to GSWA to carry out research on people of ‘mixed race’, which later developed into ‘racial hygiene’, thanks to which he was highly trusted by Hitler. The question of human remains repatriation thus signifies the broadening of object in terms of compensation from the damages incurred during the 1904–08 war to the wider sufferings inflicted by German colonialism, on the whole, and possibly to damages caused by colonial rule in general.

The second point to note is that the people who understand themselves as the most serious sufferers have not been given due recognition as eligible to speak. The government chose to be the exclusive representative of the Namibian side in negotiations and

the members of Riruako's and other organisations were only allowed to attend the ceremony and thus feel alienated. What increases their discontent is the treatment of the repatriated remains. While those communities wishing to bury their own ancestors' remains in their village according to tradition, just as the case of Sara Baartman in South Africa whose remains were returned and buried in her homeland, however controversial it may have been, are left dissatisfied. The Namibian government instead is said to be planning to exhibit them in the Independence Memorial Museum, which opened in March 2014 in Windhoek. The exhibition of these remains in this stately museum would signify that the memories and stories of various groups of people who suffered under the 1904–08 war would end up being moulded into a state-sanctioned national history.²⁰

Riruako, the central figure in the reparation claims, passed away in June 2014. The reparations movement lost its helmsman and appealing power, but one might be able to say that the broadening movement no longer needs a leader from the Herero and is challenging the regional/ethnic/political configuration whose central role was assigned respectively to the Ovambo and the Herero. In fact, among those individuals engaged in the current movement are also some leading members of SWAPO.

Ida Hoffmann, who herself used to be a member of parliament representing SWAPO and now the leader of the reparation movement of the Namas, attests that the Nama people had its own initiative in demanding reparations, independent of Riruako's, and women played an important role in it,²¹ contrary to the popular belief that it was the Riruako's action that had given impetus to others. The background to the women's initiative was the fact that women and children were also the victims of the extreme violence such as indiscriminate slaughter, forced labour, and moreover,

sexual violence during the war of 1904–08. That opens up the question of sexual violence, which occurred not only during wartime but also in ‘peacetime’ under German and South African rule and calls our attention to continuity between ‘wartime’ and ‘peacetime’ in the colony. The gender viewpoint might furthermore lead to another revision of the historiography that has been constrained by racial and ethnic formation.

Furthermore, the movement has given rise to requests for repatriation from the Herero people in Botswana who are descendants of refugees from the time of the 1904–08 war and have been receiving attention with the extension of the movement, to join their fellow Hereros in Namibia (*New Era*, 11 February 2014). While the direct incentive for them to return is their discontent with the tourism policy of the government of Botswana, which affects their stock rearing negatively, their voice has called into question the legitimacy of the current national border, which was derived from the colonial border lines.

Although there is a range of problems revolving around state and nation, as mentioned above, SWAPO has received increasing support, especially in the recent years. Whereas in the Constitutional Election prior to independence, SWAPO received 60 per cent of the votes, in the 2014 general elections, the SWAPO presidential candidate, Hage Geingob, garnered a whopping 87 per cent of the vote, and in the parliamentary elections, SWAPO received almost 80 per cent of the votes. In the meantime, the DTA lost significant influence and while new parties were created by people who criticised SWAPO from within its own ranks and then defected, such parties made their appearance and died out. Thus, Namibian politics today is *de facto* a one-party system. While the land reform that was supposed to be central in the post-independence transformation made hardly any progress, the privileges were

concentrated in the hands of SWAPO and government leaders and those around them and despite the widening economic disparity,²² people have no choice but to rely on SWAPO. In that context, the movement to claim reparations for the victims of German colonial violence is beginning to play a role in uniting people who are trying to oppose the government's authoritarianism, even if it harbours elements of further fragmentation, such as the rivalry between factions within the Herero people.

In the 'position paper' jointly signed by Riruako and the Nama chief D. Frederick in December 2007, land redistribution was explicitly demanded as an important part of reparation.²³ There is now a growing sense among Herero and Nama people that they may have to resort to more drastic measures, such as land occupation.²⁴ This reminds us of the case of Zimbabwe in the recent past. To those who feel that the poverty resulting from extreme colonial violence has not been overcome by the post-independence government, questioning the colonial responsibility of the former colonial power and questioning the post-colonial responsibility of the current state power are beginning to merge.²⁵ These changes cannot support the conventional history picture of the country.

5.4. Reclaiming the Nation and National History, and Beyond

As discussed in the two preceding sections, what emerges from the Namibian people's confrontation today with the legacies of the dual colonialism by Germany and South Africa is the search for a path toward becoming a nation, which is distinct from the demand from above, by the state power, at an age when the limitations of a nation-state in general have long been apparent. To use the expression of Moyo and Yeros, it is a matter of 'reclaiming the

nation’ (Moyo and Yeros 2011). They note, ‘The historic option by the nationalist movement for a one-state solution was founded on the fact that separation, preferred by the apartheid regime itself, was a recipe for continued oppression’. They go on to state, ‘The real challenge is how to reverse communal inequalities within existing states and, moreover, to ground sub-national and national identities in regional, *pan-nationalist* integration projects. In confronting this challenge, it is important to heed not only separate identity claims (or endorse them for their own sake), but also the deeper questions related to the disarticulated material conditions in which such separate identities thrive’ (Moyo and Yeros 2011, p. 20).

The pursuit of a nation from above and from below, as well as the conflict and negotiations that are involved in that pursuit, are not only a socioeconomic question as Moyo and Yeros argue, but are also a question related to the historiography. To reclaim a nation is to reclaim a nation’s history, and it implies a confrontation with the ‘national’ history desired by a postcolonial state that is becoming increasingly authoritarian. Because the national movement opted inevitably for a one-state solution, creation of its national history becomes indispensable, but as long as the boundaries and substance of the nation are called into question, then the state-driven writing of national history will fail to encompass the needs of the people. In this situation, how can a critical and imaginative national history be conceived and written that is neither the history of one dominant group nor a patchwork history of ethnic groups?

In order to deconstruct the older picture of history that endorsed the country’s ethno-regional structure as the gift of colonial legacy, we must depict history in a way that sheds light on the relationships between various groups and the connections between people that transcend today’s national borders while deeply

considering a history of specific groups. An excellent example of this is the work carried on by Gewald (1999a). While Gewald's work focuses on one ethnic group, namely the Herero, it encompasses a variety of angles, such as the diversity within the Herero, their interpersonal relationships and interaction with the Ovambo and others in the 'north', the trans-border movement of people to Botswana and other important issues, thereby successfully depicting a dynamic history rather than portraying the Herero as a closed group. Within that context, the 1904–08 war holds an important place, but rather than concentrating on definitively stating 'whether or not genocide was committed', Gewald addresses it within the longer timeframe of the pre-colonial era to the mid-20th century. However, such examples are extremely rare, and above all, we are waiting for such a history to be written by any Namibian historian.²⁶

What I would like to emphasise here is that a critical reconsideration of national history is not something that must be done solely by the nation in question, but should also be carried out through exchanges with the outside world. Let us consider the potentials and limitations such an endeavour would entail.

If we are to take the 1904–08 war in Namibia, it is worth mentioning the progress of research undertaken by German historians, who considered reparation claims thrust upon them, in terms of finding new evidence to reveal the truth. The German citizens and historians, whose major concern had long been their Nazi past, found themselves face to face with yet another past to come to terms with. Subsequent to this, interest was generated in the subject of the genocidal character of the war in Namibia. When Riruako initiated the reparation claim, the most reliable research was that of H. Drechsler, a historian from former East Germany, as well as of H. Bley of West Germany, which had long since existed,

but attracted no special attention except by a limited number of historians (Drechsler 1966; Bley 1968). When the Namibian people raised the reparation demand, Drechsler's work was suddenly thrown into the limelight because of his detailed and reliable description about the German violence in GSWA, and numerous studies have been undertaken since then, which have revealed the reality of German colonial rule there (Krüger 1999; Zimmerer 2001; Zimmerer and Zeller 2003; Schaller 2004). They are however mostly motivated by an interest in 'the genocide that predated the Holocaust', 'the first genocide of the 20th century', as well as 'German colonialism as the prehistory of Nazism', and they tend to 'seek' within colonial history the known phenomena of Nazi history, such as concentration camps, forced labour, sexual slavery, and so on.²⁷

The findings are precious and we cannot overestimate the importance of the discovery of new historical facts. However, that also raises a significant question: to what extent has the lively debate over the connection between Nazism and German colonialism, or the comparison between the two, deepened the understanding of Namibia's history as an African history and contributed to a non-Eurocentric world history? If the interest in colonial genocide should become a way of explaining the history of a former colony from the perspective of an analogy to Nazi history, then that would become a Procrustean bed producing a form of an extended national history, and it could run the risk of becoming a recolonisation of history. A quote from the writings of the Pan-Africanist leader Du Bois in 1946 would be enlightening in this regard: 'There was no Nazi atrocity – concentration camps, wholesale maiming and murder, defilement of women or ghastly blasphemy of childhood – which the Christian civilization of Europe had not long been practicing against colored folk in all parts

of the world in the name of and for the defense of a Superior Race born to rule the world'²⁸ (Du Bois 2007, p. 23).

The demand for reparations for the damages wrought by colonial violence is not simply about an official apology and material compensation; it is about overcoming the colonial way of writing history. If so, the overall process of the transformation of African society within the context of the longer history, from pre-colonial times to the present, should be paid attention, as well as the global context of the transformation.

The ethno-regional structure of Namibia owing to its colonial past has come to separate the historiography of the German colonial era from that of the South African colonial/apartheid era, and the historiography of the central and southern regions from those of the north.²⁹ What is necessary is therefore to incorporate divided writings and to elaborate alternative national histories that entail motives for transcending the colonial binaries and colonial/national borders, and at the same time are open to the larger world history.

As an attempt to reconsider the way of writing Namibian history, the following sections examine the 1904–08 war and the contemporary world through an approach that differs from that of German and other Western historians. Some topics that span Southern Africa and East Asia around the turn of the century will be selected, and connectedness and contemporaneity of the remote parts of the world will be shown. As is pointed by Cooper in his critical review of the meaning of Subaltern studies and the work of Franz Fanon to African colonial history, the approach from a point of view of historical connectedness beyond national and regional constraints would give a new insight into the way of writing of African history, particularly of national histories (Cooper 1994).

5.5. Potential of Connected History for Alternative National Histories (1)

The war of 1904–08 in Namibia has gained attention among Western scholars because of its genocidal nature and its possible relationship to Nazism in later years. Indiscriminate violence against colonised people and those to be colonised was not an isolated phenomenon in the world those days.³⁰

One month after the Herero uprising against the Germans had started the Russo-Japanese War erupted in East Asia. This was a conflict between the emerging imperial power, Japan, and an older power that was newly expanding its empire, Russia, during which Japan embarked on the colonisation of Korea³¹ and gained a foothold in north-eastern China (Manchuria). An important aspect of this war between two imperial powers was the suppression of indigenous people, especially of those engaged as guerrillas, be it the indigenous Korean or Chinese people, and in that sense the war shares a common feature with the South African War a couple of years earlier. In the Russo-Japanese War, Korea as well as the Qing Dynasty of China was a ‘non-interested’ and ‘neutral’ country, but Japan compelled Korea to cooperate with its war effort as an ‘allied nation’ and requisitioned properties and mobilised forced labour. Moreover, as pointed out by Oe, who analysed a bulk of soldiers’ letters, the Japanese military carried out indiscriminate killings not in the battle with the Russians, but against the Korean ‘*Uibyeong*’ (Righteous Army) guerrillas (Oe 1988, pp. 71–9).³² During the Siege of Port Arthur, a harbour town of China that was made ‘leased territory’ by Russia, they tried to annihilate the indigenous Chinese people and raped women. The Japanese army regarded the north-eastern part of China, which was under Russian influence, as ‘occupied enemy territory’, and thus carried out requisitioning and

forced labour (Iguchi 1988, pp. 101–14). In spite of the difference in the treatment, either as ‘ally’ or ‘enemy’, the Japanese military carried out violent war mobilisation and executions in both Korea and China, though one should not overlook that the Russians, on their part, also carried out similar actions in north-eastern China. Contrary to the circumvention that puts the spotlight on the feature that the Russo-Japanese War, in which ‘an Asian country vanquished a Western country’, encouraged non-Western countries in their pursuit of autonomy and independence, it was a war of imperialism with indiscriminate violence by the Japanese against Asian populaces. It did not take long before nationalists of Asian countries were disillusioned. Wars of indiscriminate carnage were being carried out simultaneously in East Asia by the Japanese against the Koreans and Chinese, and in Africa by the Germans against the people of South-West Africa.

However, this was not the first instance of modern Japan conducting this type of warfare or of perpetrating indiscriminate violence during a war. It was preceded by two other wars in East Asia, namely the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–95 and the Boxer War of 1900–01. A recent study by Inoue exposed the fact that during the Sino-Japanese War, which was set off by the reactions by the both powers to the *Donghak Peasant Revolution*³³ in Korea, the Japanese army planned and partially practised a ‘total massacre’ of the Donghak peasants (Inoue 2013). Strong evidence of the degree and characteristics of the violence in the Japanese war effort emerges from the factuality of a large number of skulls brought back to Japan, to some ‘imperial’ universities. Those were the skulls of Koreans who were killed during this war, along with those of the *Ainuu*, a Japanese ethnic minority, who had been mobilised for the war in Korea. Inoue concludes that the Sino-Japanese War was one of genocide against Korean peasants. Japan, having secured

‘independence’ for Korea, which meant the exclusion of Chinese influence, besides the acquisition of Taiwan and some surrounding islands as a result of this war, thus emerged as a new colonial power. Subsequently it joined the Eight-Nation Alliance alongside the Western powers and the Ottoman Empire when the Boxer Rebellion of 1900 occurred in Qing China. The resistance to the territorial and economic invasion by foreign powers and the war of suppression of resistance movement occurred at the same time that the South African War was being waged at the southern tip of the African continent. During this war, and above all, in the notorious ‘sweep-up’ phase of the war after the Siege of Beijing as well as in what were called ‘punitive’ operations, indiscriminate massacres, pillaging and rape were carried out irrespective of whether the victim was a member of the Boxers or not, and in those actions Japan played a central role along with Germany and Russia (Kuß and Martin 2002; Kuß 2010). The dispatch of the Japanese troops at that time and their continuous presence in China was a prelude to the Russo-Japanese War four years later.

The 1904–08 war in GSWA occurred precisely during this period when the East Asian people were being drawn into imperialist wars and colonial rule, and the two concurrent events were not unrelated. General L. von Trotha, who issued the so-called ‘annihilation order’,³⁴ which is considered the definitive proof that the war in GSWA was genocide, had been involved in the Boxer War prior to his arrival in GSWA (Schnee 1920, pp. 5543–44). Von Trotha and his men took part in the ‘sweep-up’ operation in the War, where the Japanese army also played an important role, and brought with them the experience of exercising extreme violence against indigenous people with or without arms when they headed to Africa (Gewald 2005). The indiscriminate massacre of the Herero and the cruel suppression of the Nama guerrillas were not the sole

invention of German militarism. Each member of the Eight-Nation Alliance brought to bear its own experiences of colonial wars on the Chinese battlefield, shared the practices and brought them back to their respective colonies. Just as Von Trotha himself had experience of smothering the ‘Wahehe Rebellion’ in German East Africa prior to proceeding to China, Britain’s Admiral E. H. Seymour, who took the command of the Eight-Nation Alliance, arrived in China after being active in a number of the realms of the British Empire, including West Africa, Congo, Egypt and South Africa (Seymour 1911), while General H. Frey, who commanded the French troops in the Alliance, took pride in his record of having fought against Samori Touré in West Africa (Frey 1888).

What is interesting here is not the imperial powers’ war efforts *per se*, but the transfer and application of war experiences between China and Africa, two places that are geographically far apart and have different socio-political conditions, owing to the common features between the side of indigenous popular resistance and those opposing them, in addition to the practices of guerrillas. For example, during the Maji Maji Rebellion that began in the year after the war in GSWA in another German colony, East Africa, people believed that a gulp of the magical water called *maji* would give them an indestructible body against an enemy’s bullet. The German rulers felt threatened by the spread of this ‘unreasonable’ and ‘irrational’ belief and they viewed the spirit medium that controlled the *maji* as an organ stirring up rebellion, and became determined to suppress that thoroughly (Iliffe 1969; Beez 2003). The Boxers had a belief that the swallowing of a paper amulet and the practice of boxing would make them immortal. The Europeans witnessed in Africa what they had seen in China five years before. And a decade later in Congo, priestess Maria Nkoie attracted followers with claims that her magic would protect them even from bullets,

enabling her to lead a resistance movement that lasted five years (Isaacman and Vansina 1985, p. 92). Although not always carrying an assurance of immortality, spirit mediums, witch doctors and prophets played a role in almost every resistance movement in Africa from the late 19th century to the early 20th century, as was the case, for example with the Shona spirit medium, Nehanda, in the Chimurenga in Rhodesia 1896–97 (Ranger 1967).

It is important to avoid overlooking women's contribution as actors who were often the ones controlling the magical power. In the Boxer Rebellion, female Boxers organised in 'Red Lanterns', young women carrying red lanterns were believed to possess supernatural powers to the extent that they could even fly as far as St. Petersburg to damage the enemy. These women were instrumental in playing an important part in fighting alongside the male Boxers. Such women, who wielded spiritual powers and were able to accomplish tasks that men could not, had the power to shake the foundation of social order and authority, and that is precisely why they succeeded in playing a role in standing against the foreign invasion.

There was no direct connection between the popular beliefs and popular resistance movements in various sites in Africa or between Africa and East Asia in that age. However, the contemporaneous existence of similar resistance invited similar violence on the part of imperial powers to suppress them and spread the same type of violence across the world and that, in turn, gave rise to similar resistance movements, thus producing a cycle of violence and resistance.

5.6. Potential of Connected History for Alternative National Histories (2)

It was not only the raw violence that connected Africa and East Asia at the time. Movement of people and exchange of information were also part of the connectedness.

In GSWA, as a result of the genocidal war, there was quite naturally a labour shortage. A solution to the problem was, above all, to recruit migrant labour from Ovamboland, which held half the population in the territory, and the assignment of this role as a massive labour reservoir for the region became the harbinger of the colonial project that was later carried out in full force by South Africa (Hayes et al. 1998). However, during that process, the German colonial authority was seeking an additional possibility, which was conceived of by none other than the Commander of the annihilating war, Von Trotha.

In November 1904, when the annihilation of the Herero was nearly concluded and the battle against the Nama guerrillas was under way, Von Trotha requested of the German envoy in Beijing ‘500 Chinese coolies’ to be sent to him, ‘if possible, from Northern China’, and asked about the conditions governing it. The envoy responded that he thought it would be possible to work through German traders active in China to recruit in Qingdao, the centre of Germany’s leased territory of Kiautschou Bay, ‘under the same conditions as the Transvaal’s coolies’.³⁵

The phrase ‘under the same conditions as the Transvaal’s coolies’ can naturally refer to those Chinese indentured labourers who were introduced to the gold mines in Witwatersrand (Rand) from June 1904 to make up for a serious labour shortage resulting from the South African War. As noted by Richardson and Bright, this attempt met with resistance from the white labourers and was

abandoned after just three years, but the impact it had, in the sense that it introduced people of 'yet another colour' to this racialising society, was significant (Richardson 1982; Bright 2013).

Looking at the supply side, the Chinese who worked in the South African mining industry for six years from 1904 were overwhelmingly from Zhili (today's Hebei, south of Beijing) and Shandong, the direct hinterland of Kiautchow (Richardson 1982, pp. 104–34, 194). These areas were the scene of the Boxer War in 1900–01 and subsequently devastated by the Russo-Japanese War. When north-eastern China, where these people had previously gone as migrant labour, became the setting of the Russo-Japanese War, they became unemployed. The recruitment of labour for the South African mines was carried out exactly during that time and in that area. This sheds light on the fact that the introduction of Chinese labourers to South Africa was closely related to the wars of imperialism in East Asia.

As for Von Trotha's idea to import Chinese labourers to Africa, the plan did not materialise although he did gather information through the envoy in China. However, this episode shows that the war efforts of the competing imperial powers at the turn of the 20th century referred to one another and even relied on one another not only in terms of the method of direct violence but also in the method of exploitation, and that the political and economic development in East Asia, from the Boxer War to the Russo-Japanese War, and the contemporary conflicts in Southern Africa are thus entwined with each other.

An additional fact is that the introduction of Chinese labourers to South Africa also promoted the introduction of women, namely the supply of prostitutes. From the 1890s on, prostitution spread in Johannesburg and it is known to have become particularly rampant during the South African War. Those working in the trade included

not only South African women but also many women brought there from Europe, so-called ‘white slaves’ – a practice criticised by advocates of social reform movements. Van Onselen notes that there were also Japanese women among the ‘white slaves’ in Johannesburg and Kimberley, and they had prostitute–client associations with the Chinese who had just arrived at the mines (Van Onselen 1982, p. 138). These Japanese women were brought there by French and American recruiters who were originally active in north-eastern China, providing women for the Russian troops during the Russo-Japanese War. They were recruiting women at the same time, at the same place, and to the same destination as the labour recruiters for the Rand mines.

The early 20th century was a time when migrant labourers from various places throughout Southern Africa, including GSWA (Gewald 1999b), were recruited for the Rand mines, and the regional economic structure took shape transcending colonial borders, despite the imperial rivalry, and what is more, even distant East Asia was within the range of the formation.

Lastly, it is worth mentioning that other kinds of connectedness between Southern Africa and East Asia, although slight, existed other than imperial projects.

One interesting example is a letter sent from Japan to GSWA in the midst of the 1904–08 war.³⁶ In a war memoir published in 1909 by German Captain M. Bayer, he refers to the arrival of a letter from Japan, which was, during the Russo-Japanese War, addressed to Hendrik Witbooi, the leader of the Nama uprising. Bayer writes, ‘The letter came from Japan, which was right in the middle of a war. In halting English, the author encouraged Hendrik to fight to the end to overthrow the rule of the whites, just as the Japanese were doing. In order to achieve military success, he suggested the Hottentots, as the most effective means, to keep all their measures

secret! The coloured race must unite against the Aryans. It said: Peoples of Europe ...!' (Bayer 1909, p. 270).³⁷

Although no letter has been found yet to back up Bayer's account, it is likely that a letter along those lines did exist. Nevertheless, if so, then who could the author have been?

As is widely known, the Russo-Japanese War gave rise to the 'Yellow Peril' discourse in Western countries. Against that backdrop, there is a possibility that an author stating, 'Let's fight to the end against the whites' would have been a 'Pan-Asianist' who was countering the 'Yellow Peril' theory by claiming 'White Peril'. One such person, for example, was Tenshin Okakura, a philosopher and a man of letters, who argued for the 'superiority' of Japanese and Oriental traditional arts, and who in 1904 was invited to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, where he would later become the head of the Asian arts division. In his 1904 work, *The Awakening of Japan*,³⁸ he speaks of the 'White Disaster' (Okakura 1904, pp. 95-112).³⁹ What makes one think that the author of the letter was conscious of the 'Yellow Peril' argument is the expression 'Peoples of Europe!' that appears in the conclusion. This phrase clearly is a reference to the words 'Peoples of Europe, guard your dearest good', which was the title of a painting, *Gelbe Gefahr* (Yellow Peril), that German Kaiser Wilhelm II sent as a gift to Russian Emperor Nicholas II in 1895.⁴⁰

Setting aside the speculation about the letter's author, it is worth noting that there was someone in the 'Far East' who was interested in the war in an African colony at the opening of the 20th century, and spoke about the unity of the 'coloured race' in a way that was inclusive even of Africans, however abstract it may be, particularly considering the development of the idea of 'Pan-Asianism' into the rationale of ultra-nationalism and expansionism in later years.

Furthermore, there were in fact other people in Japan who may

have had information about the war in GSWA, although not candidates for the author of this letter: the early socialists. Japanese socialists in the early 20th century were carefully observing the activities of the socialist political parties in Europe, including the Social Democratic Party of Germany, and articles from its party newspaper, *Vorwärts*, were frequently translated by them and introduced in Japan. That being the case, when August Bebel took up the issue of the GSWA war in the German *Reichstag* in 1904, it is quite possible that the news had reached Japan's socialists, although they were not proponents of the 'White Peril' discourse.

Japan's socialists were also closely watching the situation in South Africa at that time. Their newspaper, *Heimin Shimbun* (The Commoners' News), as well as its successor paper, *Chokugen* (Direct Words), included commentary on trends around the world in the form of translation and introduction of articles from foreign newspapers. They directed a critical eye toward British imperialism in South Africa, and associated it with criticism of Japanese imperialism. For example, in April 1904, shortly after the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War, an article described the substantial military costs expended by the British in the South African War, stating, 'In the future, hopefully Japan will not end up the same way that Britain has in the occupation of Manchuria (north-eastern China)' (*Heimin Shimbun*, 17 April 1904). According to a November 1904 article, 'The British-Transvaal War has in fact not yet finished. The war is no more a national war, but a class war between the British capitalists and the Transvaal labourers' (*Heimin Shimbun*, 27 November 1904). They were apparently interested in the Independent Labour Party of the Transvaal and also in the socialist activities in Durban (*Heimin Shimbun*, 27 November 1904; 9 April 1905; 2 July 1905).

The socialists in Japan were at the same time sensitive about the

racial aspect of the labour issues, paying attention to the Chinese labourers on the Rand. When the employment of Chinese labourers started, an English article titled, 'Asian Workers in Transvaal' was published, offering the criticism: 'This is only a disguised form of slavery. Is it necessary to bind innocent labourers in chains in order to make them slaves?' (*Heimin Shimibun*, 15 May 1904).⁴¹ A July article noted, 'The issue of the Chinese in South Africa has subsequently become increasingly serious, and in Cape Town, it is said that a bill to expel the Chinese has already been passed by the parliament' (*Heimin Shimibun*, 17 July 1904). The socialists further ran articles on strikes by those workers, with sympathy for their cause (*Chokugen*, 9 April 1905; 16 April 1905). One can surmise that the assertions of the British Independent Labour Party are reflected in these articles, but even so, within these short articles one can also find the unique perspective of Japan's socialists. Japan's socialists were far more critical about the racial discrimination in their working conditions not only of the 'yellows' but also of the blacks, whereas the British socialists were critical from the point of view of protecting white labourers. They wrote, 'While there are blacks who have no homes and no education on the one hand, there are poor whites on the other. The capitalists are in addition bringing in yellow labourers, mainly Chinese, and skilfully manipulating the relationship of the races so that to exploit all of them and secure excessive profits' (*Chokugen*, 2 July 1905).

Here, one can find another kind of connectedness that existed with regard to colonialism and imperialism in early 20th century as regards the global interests among intellectuals, which are invisible if one sees the history of a colony only in its relationship to the colonial master in dichotomy.

5.7. Conclusion

In so far as the socio-economic and political conflicts in today's Namibia are inseparable from the legacies of the ethno-regional structure created by colonialism, we could find the potential for conflict resolution through deconstructing the history understanding that corresponds to those legacies, from both within and outside of the nation and its national history, and reconstructing an alternative picture.

The points made in the preceding two sections represent an attempt for the purpose of deconstruction and reconstruction from outside. A number of aspects were identified with regard to Namibia during the 1904–08 war, as well as Southern Africa and some other places in Africa from around the same time, where there was a certain intersection with East Asia. These are still no more than a collection of fragments, and similar work must be done with regard to other time periods and other intersections. However, as bricolage often signifies creativity, the collection here, through a constant interactive reference to other sets of collections, could contribute to conceptualise an alternative national history that is open to the outside world, and be part of world history, which is neither a Hegelian version of it nor a global history stripped of national histories.

Kader Asmal, one of the designers of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), explains that the process of creating the 'shared memory' intended by the TRC is not a creation of a homogeneous nationhood, but rather a process of historical accountability. He states, 'This is a workday exercise, involving academic controversy, political debate, media revelations, processes of proof and disproof' (Asmal et al. 1997, pp. 9-10). In speaking of the importance of the social process of discovering and confirming

‘historical facts’, and solidifying those as a ‘shared memory’, the instance which Asmal refers to is that of the ‘comfort women’ issue regarding the colonial past of Japan. He points to the fact that through the discovery by a historian of historical documents, the government was forced to change its position of denying historical facts.⁴²

Here, Asmal is raising the issue of the process of creating a shared memory with the goal of achieving social reconciliation in post-apartheid South Africa, but it is impressive in that he refers to the current controversy in East Asia related to colonial history from a half century earlier. Extension or liberation of national history as a potential for conflict resolution, as is discussed in this chapter, might promote this kind of interest in African contexts.

As for Namibia, the government’s cautious attitude toward the reparations issue is likely to be induced by a fear that the search for the ‘truth’ about violence under German colonial rule would then leap to a search for the violence under South African rule, and that would inevitably call into question the violence perpetrated by SWAPO during the liberation struggle.⁴³ No TRC was created in post-liberation Namibia after all. However, in the design of the South African TRC, which was on the vanguard of the kind, various experiences across the world in transitional and postcolonial justice were referred to, besides the well-known instance of Latin American countries, and it should have had a more flexible concept of a nation, which the fellow nations could enrich.

A quarter of a century ago, on the eve of Namibia’s independence, I saw the people in full expectation of becoming a nation and the sight inspired me to question the way of writing a national history as an organic part of world history and global history. Opening up the boundary of the national history of various nations and finding connectedness and contemporaneousness

among them, and showing them as one picture could, in turn, help conceptualise alternative national histories. In that interaction, we could find a potential for the resolution of current conflicts originated in colonial legacies.

Notes

¹ At that time, Saharaui was under occupation by Morocco, and Eritrea and South Sudan subsequently declared their independence, so the term ‘last’ is not self-evident.

² Abbreviation for the United Nations Transition Assistance Group mandated to ensure the ceasefire and arrange for and monitor the election, which operated in Namibia from April 1989 until independence in March 1990.

³ <http://www.moiabrahimfoundation.org/iiag/data-portal/> (last accessed 1 December 2015).

⁴ <https://www.hrw.org/Africa> (last accessed 1 December 2015).

⁵ http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2015_human_development_report.pdf (last accessed 1 December 2015).

⁶ The concepts of ‘direct violence’ and ‘indirect violence’ are discussed in Chapter 1 of this volume.

⁷ SWAPO used to be the abbreviation for the South West Africa People’s Organisation, a liberation organisation. Following independence, to avoid using the colonial name of ‘South West Africa’, there was an attempt to assign other words to each of the five letters in the acronym. However, these did not take root in society at all, so the attempt was abandoned, and the official name of the current party in power is simply the SWAPO Party.

⁸ In response to the secession movement by the people of the Caprivi Strip (present day Zambezi Region), itself a typical colonial creation, the military was dispatched in 1999, resulting in casualties, and those arrested were held in jail without trial until 2012.

⁹ A good overview of the history of land dispossession in Namibia is Werner (1993).

¹⁰ ‘Verordnung des Gouverneurs von Deutsch-Südwestafrika, betreffend

den Verkehr in und nach dem Ambolande,' *Deutsche Kolonial-Gesetzgebung*, 1906 (Berlin, 1907), pp. 25–7. The genesis and development as well as the function of the dividing line to the present are excellently shown in detail in Miescher (2012).

¹¹ The sources of basic information on the reparations issue between Namibia and Germany discussed in this section are newspapers, *the Namibian*, among others, and some other Namibian papers such as *New Era*, *the Namibian Sun*, *Allgemeine Zeitung* as well as German newspapers. The reference is not shown one by one, so far as a specific mention is not necessary. Of the extensive literature on this topic, the newest and a thorough research with deep knowledge of both of the countries is Kössler (2015).

¹² The National Unity Democratic Organisation (NUDO), led by Riruako, was one of the important organisations forming the DTA, but it withdrew from the DTA in 2003. Needless to say, not all the Hereros accepted the role imposed by the South African authority. There were a number of prominent leaders of SWAPO, who later occupied important positions in the government of independent Namibia.

¹³ The highlight of the anniversary was the visit of the German Minister of Economic Cooperation and Development, Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul, who admitted the historical facts about the genocidal war and gave an apology (*Namibian*, 16 August 2004).

¹⁴ Among the Herero people, who have multiple factions, the position held by Riruako, of 'Paramount Chief', which was initially a colonial creation, is itself controversial among them.

¹⁵ Ovaherero/Ovambanderu Council for Dialogue on the 1904 genocide (OCD-1904).

¹⁶ Damara Cultural and Heritage Forum; Nama Genocide Technical Committee, which was founded later but the members to organise this Committee have been active since independence. See I.Hoffmann, *The Genesis of the Namibian Struggle for War Reparations* (pamphlet, 2011).

¹⁷ The German government unilaterally prepared an agreement document and requested 'reconciliation' when Namibian President Pohamba visited Berlin in 2005, and Pohamba quitted the negotiation and returned home (*Namibian*, 11 November 2005). Subsequently, the German government tried again, and they reached an accord in 2007 (*Namibian*, 8 November 2007).

¹⁸ Some members of Charité who questioned their organisation's keeping a large quantity of human skulls, launched the Charité Human Remains Project, which is investigating the origins of the remains and, based on their findings, is working to repatriate them. In addition to Namibia, they have to date returned remains to Australia and Tasmania as well. In addition, of the 20, there were 18 that were found to have been dissected on Shark Island (the wartime concentration camp), preserved in formalin, and brought to Germany, where they were later used as skull specimens. See http://anatomie.charite.de/geschichte/human_remains_projekt/restitution_of_namibian_skulls_2011/ (last accessed 1 December 2015).

¹⁹ <http://www.pr.uni-freiburg.de/pm/2014/pm.2014-03-04.18-en> (last accessed 1 December 2015).

²⁰ When I visited the Museum in August 2015, the exhibit was not yet complete and there was a large amount of empty space. While it looks not only at the Ovambo but also at the anti-colonial resistance by other groups, and includes noteworthy content, touching for example on the resistance by women, of which little was previously known; overall, it depicts a hero-centred historiography of independence that emphasised the leadership of SWAPO.

²¹ Personal communication with Ida Hoffmann on 23 November 2010 and 30 January 2012 in Windhoek.

²² For information on the growing state power of the SWAPO government and the increasing economic disparity, see Melber (2015).

²³ *Joint Position Paper from the Nama and the Ovaherero People on the Issue of Genocide and Reparation*, n.d. (2007) (pamphlet).

²⁴ Personal communication with Memory Biwa on 3 August 2015 in Cape Town.

²⁵ Yoshikuni (2009), a late Japanese researcher of Zimbabwean history, viewed this as the second democratisation of an independent African state where the burden of colonialism and post-colonialism are overlapping. In the same tune, the newly emerging youth movement of Namibia from 2014 on called 'Affirmative Repositioning' (AR), reminds us of a possible link between the reparations issue and land issue. AR calls for a remedy to the economic inequality and corruption, taking a tone that is similar to the South African Economic Freedom Fighters, and thanks to their use of social media, their influence is rapidly spreading. In August 2015, their demands for the distribution of lands on which urban youths and the

unemployed could live succeeded in drawing concessions from the government (*Namibian*, 27 July 2015). Though it remains unknown what the future relationship may be between AR, which is focused on land in urban residential areas, and the reparations movement, which might possibly look at the commercial farmland, there is undeniably an overlap between the issue of overcoming the colonial legacy and the issue of democratisation in the post-colonial state, as well as a heightening of the tension between the authoritarian state and the popular movement.

²⁶ The newest and valuable general history of Namibia is written by a British historian (Wallace 2011). The almost only general history of Namibia written by a Namibian is that of Katjavivi, which can be seen as a typical nationalist history writing in the age of struggle (Katjavivi 1988).

²⁷ The possibility of connections between the violence in GSWA or German colonies and Nazis: personal connections, the continuity of racist thinking, and the accumulation of practice and knowledge of establishment of concentration camps has been controversial among historians. It appears to carry the connotation of a colonial version of the *Sonderweg* controversy (Zimmerer 2001; Schaller 2004; Benjamin 2005; Kundrus 2005; Grosse 2006; Fitzpatrick 2008; Gerwarth and Malinowski 2009; Zimmerer 2011).

²⁸ The original American spellings are maintained.

²⁹ Hayes et al. (1998) are critical of the historians on Namibia, who are almost entirely occupied with the German colonial period. They assert that more research should be done on the period of South African occupation, which left an even greater legacy for contemporary Namibia. When B. Lau, a Namibian historian of German descent, called into question the number of Herero and Nama casualties of the 1904–08 war, which is referred to as a ‘genocide’, while also advocating that research must be done on the violence under South African rule, she was harshly criticised by researchers interested in colonial crimes as a revisionist and as trying to trivialise German crimes (Dederich 1993). Because Lau died prematurely, it is difficult to confirm her real intentions.

³⁰ This section and the next are mainly based on literature and sources in the Japanese language. Except for some very important literature and sources, they will be not referred to, considering that the translation of the titles will not help most readers consulting them.

³¹ Korea officially became a colony of Japan in 1910, but it had already

been made a protectorate of Japan under the Japan–Korea Treaty of 1905 as a result of the Russo-Japanese War.

³² ‘Uibyeong’ was a popular guerrilla force in Korea, initiated by intellectuals of Confucianism in the late 19th century, and which resisted Japanese invasion. After colonisation, it continued fighting in surrounding areas in north-eastern China and Russia.

³³ ‘Donghak’, literally meaning ‘the teaching of the East’, came into existence in the 1860s in Korea. They found many peasant followers by criticising the traditional status system as well as foreign invasion. Their revolt in 1894 against the oppression under the Korean Dynasty developed into a war against Japanese intervention.

³⁴ Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde, R1001 (Reichskolonialamt), Bd. 2089, Bl. 7. According to the order the officers were directed to kill all Herero, regardless of whether or not they owned arms, whether or not they owned cattle and regardless of gender and age.

³⁵ Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde, R1001 (Reichskolonialamt), Bd. 1228, Bl. 86–7, 89, 91, 106–7.

³⁶ I am thankful to Werner Hillebrecht, former director of the National Archives of Namibia, who called my attention to the letter quoted in the work of M. Bayer.

³⁷ M. Bayer, *Mit dem Hauptquartier in Südwestafrika* (Berlin, 1909), p. 270. The author notes that letters and postcards addressed to Hendrik arrived from various countries.

³⁸ The book was published under his real name, Kakuzo, instead of the pen name Tenshin, by which he is well-known.

³⁹ I have examined Tenshin Okakura and a number of other Pan-Asianist writers of that era, but to date have been unable to identify anyone who might have had information about the South-West African uprising.

⁴⁰ The phrase in German was ‘Völker Europas, wahrt eure heiligsten Güter’. However, the letter in question was written in English, and the person using this German expression is the one introducing the letter, Bayer, so it is unclear what words the actual sender of the letter used.

⁴¹ The original American spelling is maintained.

⁴² ‘Comfort women’ is a historical term for sexual slaves for the Japanese military during WWII, which was enforced on women from Japanese colonies and other occupied areas. The successive Japanese governments had denied the state involvement in that, but in 1993 the government

admitted it after the a Korean woman who was forced to serve as a 'comfort woman' came forward and started legal course of action and a historian Y. Yoshimi (not an archivist as Asmal states) found decisive documents on the involvement of the Japanese military (Yoshimi 2000).

⁴³ In fact, when S. Groth published a book in 1996 that raised the issue of torture and other violence within the SWAPO camp during the liberation struggle, then President Nujoma carried out an aggressive attack.

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Creating Space for Productive Deviance: The Latent Function of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa

Toshihiro Abe

6.1. Introduction

The South African government addressed its past conflicts by establishing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa (TRC) rather than take the course of setting up a war tribunal or providing full immunity. The main mandates of the TRC were to gather testimonies from victims and perpetrators, to hold public hearings¹ of selected cases, to examine applications by former perpetrators for amnesty, to recommend desirable means for the reparation for victims and to edit and publish an official report. Based on the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act of 1995, the TRC began holding nationwide public hearings in April 1996; it gathered testimonies from 22,000 victims, accepted amnesty applications from 7,100 former perpetrators and published a five-volume interim report in 1998. Reviews of the amnesty applications continued until 2000, and the final report was published in March 2003. The TRC has had an enormous impact on the study of post-conflict and transitional societies; the history of truth commission reports can be defined as ‘before’ and ‘after’ South Africa (Freeman 2006, p. 26), to the point where Claire Moon could make the critical observation that ‘a truth commission is becoming an almost mandatory requirement of any state in transition’ (Moon 2008,

p. 24). The work of the TRC has brought up numerous new issues in the field of transitional justice, such as amnesty for perpetrators, empowerment of victims through public testimonies at open hearings and application of the concept of restorative justice at a collective level. However, the TRC left unresolved other issues on matters of social integration and promoting social cohesion among former enemies.

At the start of the activities of the TRC there were pervasive expectations among practitioners as well as scholars, such as promotion of mutual understanding between former enemies, or improving the positive image of others, which is a typical aim in the fields of social psychology and conflict resolution.² However, observing the continuous tension among former social groups in the post-TRC stage, few scholars have continued to hold such expectations when analysing the reconciliation policy.

The South African experience shows that the attitudes of different racial groups towards each other, and their perceptions about public institutions, have not improved, and that the current social conditions are far removed from the ideal of a *rainbow nation*, even though some years have passed since work of the TRC concluded (Institute for Justice and Reconciliation 2009). A series of opinion surveys conducted by the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR) in Cape Town each year since 2003 has recorded no change in the percentage (46 per cent) of people who indicated that they never socialise with people from other race groups. Similarly, in 2003, 38 per cent of South Africans responded that people of other race groups were untrustworthy, and 39 per cent gave the same answer in 2009.

Furthermore, regarding policies to improve socio-economic disparity, including affirmative action policy, tensions seem to have increased. Reflecting this trend, the term ‘social cohesion’, rather

than ‘reconciliation’, has been used when discussing the current social problems. Lauren Landau, an expert scholar on South African migrant issues, recognised that top government officials also tended to use the term social cohesion (Landau et al. 2011, p. 43).

In the official report, *Towards a Fifteen Years Review*, published in 2009 by the South African presidency, the need for social cohesion is repeatedly stressed:

Social cohesion has assumed greater focus since 2004 ... The benefits of democracy have accrued unevenly to different sectors of society, weakening the sense of togetherness, which is a basis of cohesion ... Social cohesion broadly refers to what gives a society the capacity to cooperate in a way that creates the possibility for positive change ... There is reason to conclude that social cohesion is under more stress than a few years ago (pp. 28, 103–4).

The Human Sciences Research Council published a report on this topic in November 2011:

The term ‘social cohesion’ has become common in South African development debates, government planning documents, academic panels, media debates and parliamentary hearings. South Africans are generally worried that the country’s legacy of racial division remains unresolved and that class divisions, along with regional, ethnic and cultural divides and prejudices, simmer beneath the national surface and may re-erupt if the country’s economic, political or demographic stresses worsen (Struwig et al. 2011, p. 10).

How can the post-TRC situation be recognised in terms of social cohesion when anxiety between various factions ‘simmer beneath the national surface’? Does this indicate that the official attempts to

promote social reconciliation in the past should now be perceived only in a negative light?

In the following section, a critical assessment of the TRC is introduced, and the records of people's involvement in the TRC process are addressed to examine how the TRC affected people's autonomous commitment to their own past. In this examination, the social function of the TRC is analysed from the viewpoint of allowing residual space for productive deviance.

6.2. Assessment of the TRC

Many scholarly works on the TRC have evaluated the clause that allowed amnesty, in exchange for full-range testimonies and the wide-ranging public hearings in a positive light. These elements are significant when considering similar attempts in other countries, such as El Salvador, where immunity was granted to army officers who were responsible for atrocities in exchange for the publication of the official report, and Sri Lanka where public hearings had to close after threats to witnesses. In an African context, West African countries such as Sierra Leone, Liberia and Ghana introduced truth commissions to address the conflicts in each country, whereas the countries in the Southern African region did not adopt the option of truth commissions. In this sense, even though the South African TRC has not always been a model for other post-conflict countries in Africa, it should be evaluated as providing a significant reference point for exploring transition programmes after conflict.

Although expectations of the TRC at the early stages were high, during the course of its activities, there were various criticisms, partly in relation to its expected image. These criticisms were roughly categorised into two perspectives: methodological criticisms of the mandate and of the framework of the commission's activities.

First, there was criticism of the ‘victimhood’ category, which did not include violations of the pass laws and forced migrations. Any mandate not including these victims was seen as missing the main point of addressing widely experienced, basic violations of human rights by the institutions of apartheid.

While the victim-centred orientation of the TRC programme design was under evaluation, victims normally had the chance to testify only once, and the witnesses selected for the public hearings did not receive sufficient care; thus, it is doubtful that the opportunity to testify led to any psychological healing. Even worse was the fact that some people reported that the lack of sufficient attention or follow-up mechanisms had actually triggered re-traumatisation.³ At a collective level, this phenomenon was known as the ‘after-circus-syndrome’; ‘Lapsley observed that the hearings often left the townspeople at a loss: “The circus comes to town and the circus leaves – and then what?” they would ask him’ (Hayner 2001, p. 142).

Others highlighted the South African social characteristic that many non-governmental organisations (NGOs), including churches, prepared the ground for local cooperation and criticised the TRC for not including these organisations sufficiently in its outreach. The TRC was seen as lacking in its ability to mobilise potential local stakeholders and not developing close relationships and lasting cooperation with local NGOs (Van der Merwe 2003, pp. 110–2; Van der Merwe and Chapman 2008).

In terms of the framework of the activity, Mahmood Mamdani’s criticism, which concerns the responsibility of the beneficiaries (mostly white civilians), is essential. He focuses on the definition of ‘perpetration’ in the course of the TRC and indicates that only actual criminal deeds are addressed, leaving unmentioned more systematic perpetration of the crime of apartheid: ‘Based on a distinction between “perpetrators” and “beneficiaries”, I suggested that the

TRC think of two kinds of victims: victims (in a narrow sense) of perpetrators, and victims (in a broad sense) of beneficiaries. My overall critique was that the TRC had failed to shift the terms of the discourse on justice from the criminal and the political to the social, thereby letting the majority of the white population (the beneficiaries) off the hook and leaving the majority of the black population (the victims) in their apartheid-generated social predicament' (Mamdani 2009, pp. 472–3).

There has been a similar focus in studies on international justice, based on the idea of the economies of war and the redress of economic injustice after conflict (Mani 2008; Miller 2008). In these arguments, the TRC is criticised as having failed to adequately address the economic injustice that was prevalent, addressing only the criminal responsibilities of some individuals.

Criticism of the political discourse at the public hearings addressed the following concern: the TRC commissioners tended to put forward concluding remarks when victims were finished with their testimonies, by saying something along the lines of, 'Your hardship was necessary to give birth to the new South Africa'. This kind of statement is viewed negatively in that individual experiences should not be integrated into the nationalistic 'master narrative' (Chidester 1999).

More fundamental criticism was raised by Michael Neocosmos, who stated that the precondition of the TRC, which divided the people into victims and perpetrators, did not allow the possibility for participants to embody themselves as agents of liberation.⁴ This viewpoint is shared by many studies on contemporary international judiciary. They argue that the adoption of the term 'human rights violation' as a starting point diminishes the various experiences and the uniqueness of the conflict into the superficial dichotomy of victim and perpetrator.⁵

Along similar lines there is the view that calls into question the ideal of reconciliation being used only in the national context:

The TRC mainly dealt with human rights violations inside South Africa. However, the apartheid government also deployed military operations in the neighbouring countries. It raged through the African National Congress (ANC) and Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) base camps and supported the anti-government forces in these countries to maintain the apartheid regime. Consequently, more than a million non-South Africans have lost their lives, the sovereignty of independent states was threatened, and economic opportunities were also lost. Nevertheless, the TRC rarely addressed these aspects in its agenda (Mine 2010, p. 415, my translation).

The conflict during the apartheid era was not contained within South Africa's borders but involved neighbouring countries as well. The people in these countries viewed apartheid not as another country's business but as a matter in which they were also stakeholders. In this context, the TRC, which did not address victimhood in these neighbouring countries, was criticised as not matching the ideal of liberation, and therefore missing the opportunity to improve relationships with these countries.

This could be useful in our understanding of the xenophobic attacks of May 2008. Foreign migrants have described the reactions of South African society to them since 1994 in the following manner:

In Apartheid ... plenty of South Africans came to Zimbabwe, and Zimbabweans were very friendly to them. It was such a good thing; I was also living with South Africans, and it was such a good thing to live with somebody and to have a relationship with him, to listen to his views and to hear what makes him come here to Zimbabwe ... Because

at that time Zimbabwe was a very good country, the economy was much better, everything was fine in Zimbabwe, but you see now in Zimbabwe we are encountering problems. So I also came here; it is like that, that is life (Haupt 2010, p. 124).

The next quote evokes the sense of reciprocity in a more direct fashion:

Mozambique used to host South Africans (freedom fighters) who were chased away by the Apartheid government. In the '80s, the Apartheid army used to come in search of the freedom fighters, and they would attack everybody, including Mozambicans, because white soldiers couldn't separate black South Africans who were in exile in Mozambique from local Mozambicans. We never said South Africans should go back to their country because Mozambicans were being killed because of them (Haupt 2010, p. 125).

Reviewing the preceding critical evaluation of the TRC, it is recognised that these criticisms tend to share the basic precondition of positing the TRC as a medium or means for achieving a certain goal. Put differently, the TRC is worthy of criticism, it appears, because it did not achieve its ideal goals.

In fact, its actual goal differs from author to author, yet all are grounded in the concept of nation building in a broad sense, leading to an ideal of social integration. Some stress the responsibility of the beneficiary (Mamdani), and others emphasise the empowerment of the people in the struggle as agents for liberation (Neocosmos). Recognition of victimhood in the neighbouring countries is in accord with this because it also presupposes ideal relationships between newly independent South Africans and neighbouring nationals.

However, some reservations of these criticisms are necessary

because it is unclear whether the TRC was imbued with the resources to embody such objectives by the government of the time, whose political legitimacy was not sufficiently stable. One former staff member of the TRC research unit recounted that during the transition, what was most required was a strategy for setting the agenda, with few resources and little capacity to hand.⁶ Rather, other policies, such as those for Affirmative Action and Black Economic Empowerment, were also responsible for the improvement of disparity and the empowerment of former victims of discrimination, and the relationship between reconciliation policy and redress policies needs to be further scrutinised.

6.3. How Can We Understand the Function of the TRC?

6.3.1. Reconciliation as a Catalyst

Rather than assessing whether the TRC achieved a certain goal, the discussion in the rest of this chapter focuses on the social function of the TRC. This is necessary to examine how the term ‘reconciliation’ can be addressed.

Arguments based on concepts of aversive democracy, agonism and deliberative democracy have been deployed to counter arguments assessing the success or failure of the TRC as a political programme (Doxtader 2009; Gutmann and Thompson 2004; Norval 2007; Schaap 2005). These arguments in political philosophy incorporate (seemingly) negative data (such as those from the Institute of Justice and Reconciliation (IJR)) and the incorporation of post-TRC conditions into a theoretical interpretation that argues for further social change. In these arguments, the authors treat the concept of reconciliation as a catalyst for social change. The standpoint of this catalyst approach, which seeks to understand what the words and works of reconciliation bring about, is that it does not

attempt to assess the success or failure of a reconciliation policy; nor does it attempt to develop criteria for measuring how much reconciliation has been achieved. Rather, the approach provides a framework for discussing the possible or latent functions of the words and works of reconciliation.

Erik Doxtader has spoken positively about scenarios in which ‘the words of reconciliation’ served as a trigger to change the character of a relationship of conflict: ‘Appeals for reconciliation employed speech to create a time for speaking ... a process of rhetorical invention that turned justifications for enmity into the potential for productive opposition’ (Doxtader 2009, pp. 288–9).

The fact that the South African TRC and its predecessors and successors in other countries have not officially established a core definition of reconciliation during their work lays the foundation for a productive opposition to emerge discursively. In other words, the lack of a legitimised definition elicits diverse and constant debate over the meaning or possibility of reconciliation. Given people’s memories of victimisation and the symptoms of trauma and lingering animosity in a deeply divided society, the catalyst approach can be appreciated because it incorporates the difficulties of the society concerned into its theoretical articulation. Charles Villa-Vicencio, who worked as the head of the TRC’s research unit, has noted the people’s dilemma: ‘Most South Africans are ambivalent about reconciliation, finding themselves pushed and pulled between recognising the need for reconciliation and complete indifference toward it’ (Villa-Vicencio 2002, pp. 33–4). Doxtader sums up this position simply: ‘I do not answer the question of whether reconciliation in South Africa “worked” ... I suggest that this persistent question is very much the wrong question’ (Doxtader 2009, p. 24).

This article follows the perspective of this catalyst approach to

set the direction of the argument and then highlights the unintentional effectiveness of the TRC's activities. In other words, the reconciliation policy was based on a vague and loose definition of terms such as reconciliation and truth, even, at times, maintaining their religious connotations, and this worked as a device to elicit people's autonomous engagement in the process. Sociologically speaking, the focus here is on the latent function of the reconciliation activities.

6.3.2. Autonomous Engagement of People Derived from the Activities of the TRC

In this section, the following three topics are addressed: the reaction of radio listeners to the TRC hearings; a local victim support NGO; and the interaction between witnesses and audiences at public hearings. These cases reveal how the TRC allowed the direct and indirect participants in the process to develop their interpretations of the authorised space, despite the space being an officially established public space. The lack of legal definitions relating to the TRC's core terms may have played a role in generating this function. Through a case study of this type of participation, other functions of the TRC, not discussed in terms of success and failure, are explored.

a. Reaction of the radio listeners

The following newspaper article was typical of the time; writing about how the agenda was perceived by locals it reports:

Seated in the truth commission boardroom, MP and former member of the Soweto Committee of 10, Ellen Khuzwayo closed her eyes and started speaking. In her usual soft, calculating voice ... MaKuzwayo ... took us through the June 16, 1976, scholar's march. Before she could finish her story, Sophie Tema, the World newspaper journalist, took it up. Then the Rand Daily Mail photographer Peter

Magubane spoke, followed by Leonard Mosala, a member of the Committee of 10 who had also been a member of the urban Bantu council. Then it was my turn. We had been assembled as witnesses to give evidence of what happened in Soweto on June 16 and in the subsequent months. *As we were going through the motions of compiling our testimony, it suddenly dawned on me that we were trying to piece together events that had taken place 20 years ago.* Information gushed out ... As we came from different parts of Soweto, there was little danger of repeating what someone had already said or of duplicating information. But, then again, if there was repetition it could only enhance a particular viewpoint, thus making it even more credible (*Business Day*, 23 July 1996, emphasis added).

Testifying in an officially designated space was not intended solely for individual catharsis; nor was it intended for people to participate in creating an authoritative discourse. The public hearings unintentionally allowed the participants to create their own views of a collective history:

I cried on Wednesday morning. This happened as I listened to SAfm's reporter at the Truth Commission hearings in East London as she reported on the wailing of victims of apartheid atrocities. Mrs Nomonde Calata had broken down and cried uncontrollably as she recalled the death of her husband, Fort Calata ... Then came ex-MK fighter Mr Singqokwana Malgas, who also cried as he recalled the torture that he had to endure at the hands of the brutes who called themselves police officers ... As the reporter played the sound bites of this sequence, tears welled up in my eyes, for, as I listened to Malgas, I was taken back to a room on the third floor of the police building in Krugersdorp, where I was tortured in 1982. As Malgas spoke of the electricity torture and the 'helicopter' experience, where a detainee is suspended in mid-air and beaten so that he rolls around a pole inserted

between the legs, I saw myself lying naked that winter night on a floor full of water ... *I cried on Wednesday because I felt the pain again, as I also remembered other comrades* who were there with me in detention (*Sowetan*, 19 April 1996, emphasis added).

How can these reactions be understood? These are not the outcomes that the TRC had planned for, or expected, because the primary purpose of setting up the TRC public hearings had been to share the truth. Sharing the truth in public has the same objective as that of court hearings.

However, the TRC public hearings were not imbued with the role of executing the type of strict investigation and interrogation necessary for criminal justice. At the TRC hearings, information that was not strictly objective from a judicial point of view appeared to be shared. The proceedings were sometimes halted because of the reactions of audience members as well as witnesses. Yet these deviations, which provided the symbolic characteristics of the hearings, created spaces where memories could be collectively and safely recalled by both witnesses and audience members.

The vague definition of the term ‘truth and reconciliation’ must have served the TRC well in the types of cases mentioned above. Rather than the type of truth that was being legitimatised, the function of the public sharing of truth was to allow an imagining of how the testimonies could be accepted. If the mandate of the TRC had been limited to pursuing judicial impunity or historical truth, there may not have been such a flexible acceptance.

b. The Khulumani Support Group

The TRC had the potential space for participants to engage in the process autonomously because of its loose definition of the terms of truth and reconciliation. Thus, the TRC was not a repository for

people's memories. Shared memories and mutual assistance among survivors could take a course that neither the TRC nor the government could have expected or could control. One such case was the work of the Khulumani Support Group.

Khulumani, which means 'speak out' in Zulu, began its work with the establishment of the TRC and grew to be the largest victim association in South Africa, with more than 5,000 members.

Initially, the activities of the support group maintained the TRC agenda as its core, including accessing information from the commission, making proposals for victim reparations, and making public appeals on judgments on amnesty. Yet their activities were not limited to the framework of a lobbying organisation for the TRC. Khulumani staged a play that focused on the tension and contradiction in the TRC process and visited many townships, which stimulated the organisation to adapt to different challenges. The organisation was founded on its strong bonds with local communities and developed its role considerably.

While Khulumani continued to follow the TRC and how it reacted to its members, they also began to perform symbolic funeral ceremonies for those who had passed away, even though the remains had not been exhumed:

The founders of Khulumani realised that the group never would have formed without the truth commission, though it has now taken on a life of its own. Those who work closely with victims have seen the positive effect of Khulumani and similar organisations, and observed a much lower likelihood of re-traumatisation symptoms for those who are members of such groups. Many maintain that Khulumani's support provided a much greater sense of healing than the commission itself. Reverend S.K. Mbande, in Daveyton, told me that these support groups were '... one of the fruits of the commission. People coming

together and healing themselves – that never would have happened before. Fear was the order of the day. Since the truth commission, things have come out, and it's made people come together' (Hayner 2001, p. 148).

The TRC was an official body and, as such, was required to be open to all political groups, including those in conflict with each other. This meant that the commission could not be expected to create a space where closed, and therefore safe, communication could be secured. However, once it was identified that the TRC constituted an open space, the need for a different type of space became clear. Khulumani understood the people's need for such a space and developed its unique character in response. If the TRC had been considered overarching and sufficiently helpful, organisation such as Khulumani would not have developed.

c. Interaction in a public hearing (1): Oupa Gqozo changed his statement in reaction to the appeal of the audience (19 November 1996, East London)⁷

Oupa Gqozo, the former head of the Ciskei Defence Force, testified on the Bisho Massacre in terms of his responsibility for the killing of civilian protesters. He started his testimony with a cautious and well-prepared expression of remorse. He denied his own responsibility, claiming that the ANC should take more of the blame. Even though members of the audience cried out in rebuttal, Gqozo's logic was consistent and seemed to secure his innocence at first.

BRIGADIER GQOZO: I am aware that many people have and still do blame me for what happened on that unfortunate day. My reaction to that day was and still is one of great remorse and distress ... As far as I am concerned the ANC alliance needed to return to the

negotiating table and stop using the lives of innocent people for their own political gain.

MR POTGIETER: Order please, order. We won't proceed until we have got order ...

BRIGADIER GQOZO: I know that the question on everybody's lips is whether I am going to say that I am sorry for what happened on that day. I feel that I am not personally to be blamed for what happened on that day.

The testimony moved on to consider whether the Ciskei Defence Force's soldiers had started shooting first. The process stopped several times because of outcries from the audience, drawing the chairperson to call for order and discipline. During the testimony, a witness testified that a soldier had started shooting and that the question of whether Gqozo had ordered the soldiers to shoot was examined, yet he stressed that he was not in the exact place of the massacre and was simply receiving reports from the frontline whilst inside his office. He defended himself with technical facts brought up by his lawyer, while the audience members, who could not tolerate the tactical talk, increased their expressions of discontent. The transcripts record the tension at the hearing.

BRIGADIER GQOZO: I find it very difficult to accept that. Because Mr Chairman let me put it this way ... (Interruption by screaming of woman in the audience)

REV FINCA: Please keep quiet. We know that you are all frustrated, please bear with us.

MR POTGIETER: Thank you very much. We appreciate your cooperation ...

BRIGADIER GQOZO: Mr Chairman if one of the soldiers was shot by one of the other soldiers, it may have meant one thing, the

soldiers hated each other, why else would they shoot ... (intervention).

Finally, one commissioner asked Gqozo to answer her questions without consulting with his lawyer and to take note of the audience members in the front rows who had broken down and left the room screaming. She continued to ask if Gqozo had ever sent any messages to the families of the deceased and the injured. Gqozo still tried to protect himself by relying on logic, but again, a woman's screams interrupted the discussion. Next, the commissioner asked Gqozo to talk directly to the audience members 'from the heart'; however, the outcries against Gqozo, who continued to defend himself, reached a climax. The following vividly shows the interactions among the participants.

MR POTGIETER: Order please. Silence, silence. Thank you!

BRIGADIER GQOZO: ... I also didn't want to justify myself in anything that I did, because I know that that is not necessary ... Perceptions are that I am a skunk ... I am aware of that I want them to know that I regret that it ever happened and if anything can be done to replace their loss then I pray to God that a plan can be found to do it. And I would like to look at them and say please forgive me. I know that I don't deserve your forgiveness under the circumstances ... And I want to tell you from my heart that I never willed and I never wanted your people to be killed ...

MR POTGIETER: Thank you, order please, order.

DR RAMASHALA: Chairperson, I will leave that question with Brigadier Gqozo and perhaps his legal counsel. Thank you very much.

MR POTGIETER: Thank you. Order please, order. Thank you very much ...

Not many public hearings showed such drama. The case of Gqozo's testimony is an exception to the norm. However, most South Africans followed the TRC's progress through media such as TV, radios,

and newspapers. Iconic cases such as Gqozo's were repeatedly reported and could have provided a basis for people's perceptions of the agenda.

What interactions are of note in Gqozo's testimony? It can be safely said that while his status was sufficiently protected by legal logic, Gqozo changed his stance in his informal interaction with the audience.

d. Interaction in a public hearing (2): The case of Jeffery Benzien (14 July 1997, Cape Town)⁸

We are able to recognise the appearance of accidental truth from an interaction that was not planned by the TRC in the following case.

A public forum that focused on the testimony of Benzien, who was a former intelligence officer and who was involved in the torture of anti-apartheid activists, accidentally created a space for an encounter between the former torturer and his victim. Benzien also showed his remorse with an elaborately developed self-justification to build a foundation for interrogation under conditions that would be advantageous to himself.

MR BENZIEN: ... I cooperated with the Truth Commission from the outset. On the 8th of April of this year, I met members of the Truth Commission and I approached them of my own free will and I wasn't subpoenaed to attend proceedings ... In letters to the Truth Commission, I declared myself willing, should I be provided with the necessary information, to further assist the Committee ... To conclude, I would once again like to say to the family and to all the men and women whom I harmed, I would like to apologise to them ... My purpose was to arrest him and not to kill him. Although his death was a tragedy for his family, I am very, very sorry that he had to die, but the tables could very easily have been turned on that day, the outcome could have easily been very different and it could have ended with myself and

Sergeant Abels being wounded or killed. And once again, I apologise to the family for his death and I thank God that I, who also have children, a daughter of 22 years old, that I was not the person who was killed on that day.

However, the politically correct apology with tactical self-justification was interrupted by an unplanned agenda. At the hearing, there were former victims of his torture, and they applied to testify without any official registration. Their appeals to testify before the commission surprised the chairperson. However, the appeal was accepted as an exception, and the following communication ensued:

CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MR YENGENI: The first question I want to pose to you Mr Benzien is: Can you tell the Commission the circumstances surrounding my arrest and subsequent transportation to Culemborg? ...Why did the Security Branch choose you specifically to apply this [wet bag] method on MK guerillas? ...

MR BENZIEN: Mr Yengeni, today in a new South Africa I can sit here and tell you in all honesty, that I was used by the then Security Branch ... Mr Yengeni, with my absolutely unorthodox methods and, by disarming you, I am wholly convinced that I may have prevented you, your colleagues, and anyone who ever had an explosive device in Cape Town, from being branded murderers ... But in the spirit of reconciliation, we lived in a different era, we were enemies then. I have not fled the country or run away from the Police Force. I am still a policeman and trying to serve my community to the best of my ability ... Yes, Mr Yengeni, I did terrible things, I did terrible things to members of the ANC, but as God as my witness, believe me, I have also suffered. I may not call myself a victim of Apartheid, but yes Sir, I have also been a victim.

Benzien deployed a logical and consistent argument in his statement, and there seemed to be no falsehoods in his expression in terms of exposing the political (or occupational) reasons for his conduct. He apologised, calling for an understanding of the era of apartheid, referring to the ideal of reconciliation. However, the aim of the interrogator, Yengeni, was not to examine the judicial facts. He posed a question about values to Benzien.

MR YENGENI: What kind of man uses a method like that of the wet bag, on people, on other human beings, repeatedly, whilst listening to their moans and cries and groans, and taking each of those people very near to their deaths ... what kind of man are you? What kind of man is that, that can do that kind of thing; what kind of a human being is that Mr Benzien? ... When you do those things, what happens to you as a human being? What goes through your head, your mind? You know, what effect does that torture activity do to you as a human being?

MR BENZIEN: Mr Yengeni, not only you have asked me that question. I, Jeff Benzien, have asked myself that question to such an extent that I voluntarily, and it is not easy for me to say this in a full court with a lot of people who do not know me, I have approached psychiatrists to have myself evaluated, to find out what type of a person I am ... I did not find this out, either through my own stupidity or ignorance as long as I was one of the Whites, the privileged Whites with an education, who had a house, I couldn't see it being taken away. If you ask me what type of person it is that can do that, I ask myself the same question.

The accidental interaction between Benzien and Yengeni did not end with any communication that required deviations from the judicial discourse. Yengeni also demanded that Benzien demonstrate the torture known as the wet bag method, in front of the

commissioners and the audience.

CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MR YENGENI: ... This black bag that was used for torturing me and other people ... I think it would be in the interest of the public and the Commission for you to demonstrate the use of this bag.

MR BENZIEN: Commissioners, it was a cloth bag that would be submerged in water to get it completely wet. And then the way I applied it, was to get the person to lie down on the ground on his stomach ...

MR YENGENI: Now, is it possible for you to do a demonstration of how this was applied; I as a victim, I want to see what happened to me ...

CHAIRPERSON: ...Will you just show how you release it? Put it on again. Yes, and now you must show how you release it.

Finally, Yengeni's atypical interrogation of Benzien reached the point where Benzien expressed his political values. The previous relationship between Benzien and Yengeni now became reversed. Yengeni tried to draw information from deep inside Benzien's mind, but the expected information was not factual; rather, it turned out to be a statement of Benzien's values.

MR YENGENI: Now, so with the benefit of hindsight, you believe that you were wrong; so, in other words, you are then saying that not only were you wrong, but that everything that you stood for, was wrong?

MR BENZIEN: Mr Yengeni, yes.

MR YENGENI: Can you, Mr Benzien, look me straight in the eye and say to me that now, as you are sitting there, you believe that the Apartheid system was evil and was wrong?

MR BENZIEN: Yes, Sir.

What ‘dialogical truth’ can be drawn from this interaction? It should be neither the truth as a final answer nor consensus between contesting parties. The contesting parties maintain a core of justification, which cannot be removed from within them. Yet each person’s thoughts, which previously had not been aired in a public space, were elicited during the accidental encounter of conversations at cross-purposes.

Could this encounter be elicited during the course of a usual cross-examination in a court?

These are all events and outcomes that were not planned for in the agenda. The TRC was never committed to these encounters taking place. However, the vague and loose definition of the basic terms of truth and reconciliation created a space where such incidents could occur. In other words, these incidents were discussed by participants as part of their strategic engagement in, or commitment to, official programmes and institutions from the point of view of the stakeholders. The same phenomenon from the opposite side can be expressed in the sense that the structural, residual space that developed, owing to the lack of an officially defined direction, allowed participants to act in their own interests.

The former is supported by Richard Wilson’s observation of participants in the TRC hearings; Wilson conducted extensive field research in township areas during the period when the TRC was active: ‘People may pragmatically perform roles and take part in Human Rights Violation (HRV) hearings and reparation procedures, but did not necessarily accept the core human rights assumptions of the institution’ (Wilson 2001, p. 152). Some may accept Wilson’s observations as just a temporary response to the TRC’s work and assume that they have no general implications in the long term. However, invoking the frame of ‘everyday resistance’ and the

‘dominant ideology thesis’, he notes that ‘people pragmatically participate in political and economic processes, but do not necessarily take on the values of the dominant societal and state institutions’ (ibid., p. 151). An official event or institutional space may retain the possibility of use for the locals’ own strategic engagement. Yet the conditions that make such engagement possible should be questioned. In the case of the TRC, the condition is interpreted as that of leaving undefined the core terms that set the direction of the activities.

6.4. The TRC as Constituting an African Potential for Conflict Resolution

The TRC did not originate in South Africa. The basic form of a truth commission derives from preceding cases in Latin American countries such as Chile, Guatemala and Argentina. A broad examination of the category of investigation commissions on human rights violations reveals that there are many parallel examples. However, in the fields of international and transitional justice, promoting the theme of reconciliation and stressing nationwide public hearings are recognised as two prominent inventions of the South African commission. In fact, the truth commissions in Africa established after the one in South Africa have all incorporated a form of public hearing and the theme of reconciliation as an organisational slogan. More precisely, reconciliation without a precise definition and public hearings allow participants to expand the autonomous space and deviate from the agenda, which provided a framework for successors in other societies.

The significance of this argument is confirmed as follows. We have witnessed attempts on the part of the international judiciary to cope with systematic atrocities and mass violence. International

tribunals, such as those in the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Cambodia were criticised for various reasons; yet, the essential point always concerned the lack of resources, the social conditions of the concerned society that do not match the international legal standard (or expectation) and the local people's indifference. Some might even say that such a project is destined to end in failure from the beginning. One scholar laments that no previous programme had achieved its goal: '... we have focused entirely too much on the notions of closure and reconciliation. Member states of the UN and European Union have expended considerable amounts of money and human resources in chasing a will-o'-the wisp, adopting buzzwords that have no consistent definition or conceptual clarity and promoting mechanisms to achieve these obscure outcomes with little evidence that they will make a difference' (Weinstein 2011, p. 3). Yet the evaluation of the potential of the TRC depends completely on the viewpoints of individual reviewers. Those presupposing the modern, Western solution as the path for social projects – based on ordinary cause-effect schemes – only capture the failure and disarray of the TRC's wandering processes. However, those who recognise the current conundrum in international justice and reconciliation projects, posed after systematic atrocities, of how a society can set up an official space where people's autonomous reactions are elicited for promoting informal, accidental interactions among dissidents, can identify the latent function of the TRC. A well controlled, totally planned, well funded and completely satisfying social body does not create this type of initiative. This statement is not a vindication of the TRC. Instead, it argues that the case of the TRC shows how an informal official space allows for the engagement of people in, and their commitment to, a form of productive deviance.

Notes

¹ Public hearings consist of the following categories: Victim Hearing, Amnesty Hearing, Event Hearing, Special Hearing, and Institutional Hearing. The two predominant hearings were Victim Hearings and Amnesty Hearings. There was typically no opportunity for dialogue between victims and perpetrators in a Victim Hearing. Each witness was given 30 minutes of testimony in a question-answer format in hearings led by TRC commissioners. Victim Hearings were held at 63 venues around the country, for three or four days at each venue.

² The arguments in social psychology and conflict resolution studies tend to take the following steps to interpret the terms of reconciliation at a collective level: (a) all of the stakeholders should accept the legitimacy of the accommodation for dialogue; (b) the self-identification of the participants and the image of their opponents should be transformed through dialogue; and (c) an agreement should be reached, and promises for the future made, cooperatively, and these should be public (Du Bois and Du Bois-Pedain 2008; Kelman 2008; Kriesberg 2001; Nadler and Shnabel 2008; Rasmussen 2001; Riek et al. 2008; Rigby 2001; Siani-Davies and Katsikas 2009). John Paul Lederach, one of the leading scholars in conflict resolution, shared this methodology for interpreting the word reconciliation. 'Engaging the sides of a conflict with each other as humans-in-relationship', 'finding ways to address the past without getting locked into a vicious cycle of mutual exclusiveness', and 'envisioning the shared future' are the important assumptions (Lederach 1998, pp. 26–7).

³ However, Thulani Grenville-Gray, a South African psychologist, maintains that re-traumatisation itself is not necessarily fatal or completely wrong for mental recovery (Hayner 2001, p. 144).

⁴ Personal communication, December 2012.

⁵ Invoking terms such as legal fetishism (Wilson 2001, p. 29) or expansion of human rights talks in the 1990s (De Brito et al. 2001), some argue that the contemporary human rights discourse in the international judiciary has been 'flatten[ing] multiple subjectivities and complex practices and experiences' (Garcia-Godos 2008, p. 66). The results of its simplifications are that a participant is classified as a victim or a perpetrator and what he or she did is categorised as a human rights violation or not, overlooking the actual complexity by which a person may be both a victim and a perpetrator

(ibid.). Humphrey and Valverde deploy a similar criticism in using the term ‘truth politics’ in a negative way, which diminishes the phenomena of conflict into a matter of crime with a legalistic attitude that employs the term ‘human rights violation’ (Humphrey and Valverde 2008, p. 92).

⁶ Interview with Zenzile Khoisan, Cape Town, 20 February 2013.

⁷ The following record of the hearing is available at:

<http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/hrvtrans/bisho2/gqozo.htm> (last accessed 18 August 2015).

⁸ The following record is available at:

http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/amntrans/capetown/capetown_benzien.htm (last accessed 18 August 2015).

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Sharing Power for Conflict Resolution? Pluralism, Integrationism and African Potentials

Yoichi Mine

Cooperation and conflict are two sides of the same coin; both arise out of man's relationship with his fellows. The larger the group, the greater the possibility of development through cooperation, and the greater the possibility of conflict (Nyerere 1966, p. 267).

7.1. Introduction

Conflict or contradiction is centred on the law of the unity of opposites, as stated in the classic essay on contradiction by Mao Tse-Tung (Mao 1937). Opposite elements condition each other; one ceases to exist if the other disappears. As long as humans live in diverse conditions, it is impossible to eradicate conflict completely from society, and contradiction as the driver of history has always been present and permeated all processes of interaction among humans and between humans and nature. Conflict resolution is, *prima facie*, to bring about reconciliation between warring parties and restore the original, peaceful condition. However, we must address the root causes of violent conflicts by radically renovating the structure of society, when necessary, rather than by restoring the original shape of society. The manifestation of conflict may not only be inevitable but also lay down invaluable conditions to bring about a higher-dimensional resolution of antagonism as a 'negation of negation' (Žižek 2007).

It is critical not to confuse different scopes and dimensions of conflict resolution. When we face qualitatively different problems, we must take qualitatively different approaches to solve them. In fact, the cure for social malfunction resembles the practice of medical science that deals with functions of the human body and mind as an organic whole, where surgical operations and internal remedies have their own comparative advantages to resolve qualitatively different maladies. While we may search for the best combination and sequence of different remedies, there are cases in which we must make a critical choice between mutually exclusive options. Although a poor surgeon might hurt or even destroy the whole body, inflicting unnecessary pain on the patient, undecidedness on radical operation could induce more harm later.

In parallel, radical social transformation may also involve human sacrifices. Irrespective of political creed, the nature of 'the political' lies in the dichotomy between friend and enemy, a set of opposites such as good and evil, beautiful and ugly, and benefit and loss. Within the realm of friend–enemy relationships, members in the same camp are required to die for their brethren and kill enemies without hesitation, as exemplarily shown in the belligerency of modern nation states (Schmitt 1932/1996, pp. 26, 46). In this perspective, killing the foreign enemies is like removing a cancer.

Although this friend–enemy logic discloses the essence of modern nationalism and the politics of national liberation, the prerogative of the sovereignty of nation-states to demand the life of people is far from guaranteed. At the least, as a lesson of the 20th century history, it must be noted that the less we make sacrifices, the better the quality of conflict process, because, in any attempt to achieve a purposeful, systemic transformation of society, eliminating an enemy as human agency should never be considered an end in itself. If progressive forces tolerate the escalation of

violence with no discipline, the consistency between the means and the end will be lost, and the ultimate objective of human freedom, such as the withering away of the repressive state apparatus without compromising the nation as a cultural community, will continue evading us. Despite the enticement of the Fanonian vision of emancipatory violence,¹ the price of violent ruptures can be unbearably high.

This chapter presents a tentative proposition concerning African potentials for conflict resolution and co-existence by considering the nature of the struggle for power and power sharing. Written from a rather preliminary perspective of the political economy of Africa in general, and of Southern/South Africa in particular, the chapter is meant to complement the richness of down-to-earth reflections, mostly based on detailed fieldwork, presented in other chapters of this book. The following two sections discuss historical peace potentials of Africa and conflict patterns specific to Southern Africa. Then, in the subsequent four sections, pros and cons of pluralist power sharing as a method of conflict resolution will be examined in contraposition to the integrationist vision of the Africanist and Black Consciousness movements in South Africa. The significance of strategic choice of institutions for conflict resolution, as well as the advantage of power sharing in a larger political unit, will be stressed. Finally, the last section concludes by presenting a wider perspective on Asian and African solidarity for releasing their regional potentials for conflict resolution.

7.2. Potentials for Peace and Violence in Africa

Everyday conflict never ceases to be in society as long as humans are diverse. Resilient communities are self-regulating open systems, and one of the common objectives of this book project

was to collect best practices for re/negotiating equilibria in heuristic ways. We begin by studying individual and particular things to obtain knowledge on the common essence of things. Then we make use of this common essence to study various particular things to know the particular essence of things. In this way, the sequence of the accumulation of human knowledge is cyclical, from the particular to the general and vice versa (Mao 1937/2007, p. 77). In this dialectic endeavour of knowledge and action, we can learn practical lessons even from everyday practices of families or villages for effective conflict prevention and resolution.² On the other hand, as already noted, in a larger group in which particular communities and individuals are embedded, more radical systemic transformations may be required to restore justice.

The term ‘African potentials’, is powerfully imaginative. First and foremost, the adjective, ‘African’, signifies the ownership by the local, reaffirming the strong moral imperative that Africa’s problems should be solved by Africans. In order to prevent the occurrence of a calamity with a magnitude of the Rwandan genocide in 1994, a decisive foreign intervention is justified, but that must be led principally by African regional organisations and forces. In this regard, it is anomalous that a group of former colonial powers should impose on African politicians moderate behaviour as conditionality, threatening military intervention in the name of the international community; this remedy for conflict prevention in Africa, inconceivable before the demise of the Cold War, is advocated by the Oxford economist, Paul Collier, using simple game theory (Collier 2009, pp. 202–27). The notion of ‘African potentials’, in contrast, sticks to the principle of African ownership. However, it is problematic to define these potentials in an essentialist way, as the potentials of a given society are the ensemble of the social relations constructed in history. Every understanding

of the potentials of human society must be conditioned by certain historical frames, and today's actuality is nothing but a realisation of potentiality in the past.

Historically, Africa has largely been a continent of peace. As Julius Nyerere described, the 'surprising thing is not that there has been so much political instability in Africa, but that there has been so much stability, although this fact is less publicised internationally' (Nyerere 2000, p. xiv). While the European and the East Asian history are characterised by successive wars, violent revolutions and aggressive state-building (Tilly 1992; Wong 1997), most African states and empires, being surrounded by open frontiers, emerged peacefully and vanished quietly (Herbst 2000; Connah 2001; Iliffe 2007). Even though the continent did experience the slave trade, colonial coercion and localised wars, the process of independence of sovereign states around 1960 was generally peaceful. It is clearly a fallacy to assume that the African history is more violent than its European and Asian counterparts.

Generally, the historical peace potentials of Africa seem to be related to the relatively high mobility of people on the continent, where decentralised democracy based on foot voting functioned against the sociogeographic backdrop of land abundance (see Chapter 1 of this volume). This logic of indigenous democracy in land-abundant settings was illuminated in Hirschman (1978), which referred to the works of Evans-Pritchard on the Nuer and of Turnbull on the Mbuti. In a similar vein, Kopytoff (1987, chap. 1) elucidated the nexus of the frontier tradition and the pan-African culture, and Thompson (1990, chap. 1) stressed the original fluidity of peoples in the Southern African past.

Then, the colonial mode of rule was grafted from above onto this pattern of social formation; the length of European colonialism and the depth of its penetration into African society

stand out compared to the experience of its counterparts in East Asia. The African independent states inherited coercive and exploitative colonial structures and even its subliminal codes of operation, as Young (1994) demonstrated in his study on *Bula Matari* (an image of rock-crushing European colonisers) in Congo. The notion of ‘freedom’ is defined as the power to act according to one’s own will free of restraints. The European colonial rule in Africa was an extreme form of subjugation of people, radically curtailing the range of choices regarding collective as well as individual decision making of Africans, and this made Nyerere publish his major works as a trilogy of freedom.

7.3. Conflict Patterns Specific to Southern Africa

The salient historical feature of the regional political economy of Southern Africa is the penetration of settler capitalism, the spirit of which was personified by the prototypical imperialist Cecil Rhodes (e.g. Maylam 2005). The expansion of mining capitalism and the recruitment of circular migrants for super-exploitation shaped the regional pattern of capital accumulation with the marked polarisation of the centre and the peripheries (Wolpe 1972; Meillassoux 1975; Palmer and Parsons eds 1977; Magubane 1979; see also Chapter 2 of this volume). The military conquest in the late 19th century was followed by the systematic dispossession of the land from the indigenous African population. The process of deprivation and popular feelings were vividly described in Plaatje (1916) and Mbeki (1964) in the South African historiography. As closely examined in several chapters of this book, land hunger has been the chief issue of the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe as well, and the presence of European settler communities seriously hampered the political liberation of the entire region including the

Lusophone nations, Mozambique and Angola. In the face of colonial land grabbing and forced labour, Africans continued raising voices in protracted liberation wars in Southern Africa. What forged the common regional identity of Southern Africa was the history of land dispossession, the influence of South Africa's racial capitalism and the operations of its military machines in the region, as well as the resistance of the Frontline States to them. In this regional case, the enemy defined the boundary of friends.³

The colonial legacy in Southern Africa could not be erased instantly by the liquidation of formal apartheid. Hereafter, the major focus of this chapter is placed on the experiences in South Africa, 'a microcosm of the world capitalist system' and the site of internal colonialism (Amin 2011, p. 332), keeping the regional contexts in mind. In South Africa, based on the Natives Land Act of 1913, the white segregationist regime designated about 13 per cent of the South African territory as homelands (Bantustans), the labour reserves of migrant workers, where African 'traditional' practices were preserved to consolidate patriarchal rules thereby stabilising the reproduction of wage labour. Drawing on cultural essentialism, South African policy discourses depicted 'tribal traditions' associated with those territories as fixed and invariable entities, laying an ideological foundation for the post-war 'separate development', a euphemism for apartheid.⁴ In the Southern African contexts, where similar systems of colonial segregation were introduced, it is too naïve to equate 'indigenous' practices with African potentials without due consideration of the legacy of apartheid policies in dividing the majority Africans into antagonistic minorities obsessed with their own 'traditions'.

Racial capitalism generated popular resistance. It is important to note that there have been two intertwined threads in the history of resistance in South Africa. On the one hand, the mainstream

national liberation movement in South Africa was born with the foundation of the African National Congress (ANC) in 1912 and of the South African Communist Party (SACP) in 1921.⁵ On the other hand, though having drawn less attention, a dynamic popular movement informed with Africanist ideas also gained momentum when the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU) was founded in Cape Town in 1919 by Clements Kadalie from Nyasaland (Malawi). Inspired by the Garveyite notion of ‘Africa for the Africans’, the ICU movement spread not only in South Africa nationwide but also to South West Africa and the two Rhodesias, and also radicalised as a millenarian peasant movement in the Xhosa countryside of Transkei in South Africa (Bradford 1987, chap. 7; Hill and Pirio 1987; Van der Walt 2007). Although the ICU went into decline by the early 1930s, the ephemeral movement was phenomenal in its unique combination of the African-American aspiration of black liberation (*Ama Melika* [the Americans] are coming in ships and planes to liberate South Africa) and the spontaneous spread into rural areas, as well as the geographic expansion to a wider Southern African region.

7.4. Chartists versus Africanists

In June 1948, the National Party rose to power in South Africa and started to push through draconian social engineering to impose apartheid. As a watershed event of the opposition rallying around the ANC, the Freedom Charter was adopted in June 1955 by the delegates of African, Coloured, Indian and white anti-apartheid organisations as a document presenting the future vision of a non-racial South African society. The Charter begins with the famous resounding statement that ‘South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that no government can justly claim

authority unless it is based on the will of all the people'. The Charter then reaffirms the principle of equal rights and mutual respect enjoyed by all ethnic (the document uses the term 'national') and racial groups:

There shall be equal status in the bodies of state, in the courts and in the schools for all national groups and races; All people shall have equal right to use their own languages, and to develop their own folk culture and customs; All national groups shall be protected by law against insults to their race and national pride; The preaching and practice of national, race or colour discrimination and contempt shall be a punishable crime.⁶

While prohibiting the institutional and customary practices of racial and ethnic discrimination, the Freedom Charter expected each group culture to flourish, and individual groups to be governed by 'democratic organs of self-government', with all segments of South African society sharing political power at the national level. The basic frame was racial/ethnic pluralism in which all groups were to be treated equally rather than encouraged to cross the group boundaries. Based on the popular grievances and aspirations, the Charter was formulated as a colourful mixture of all generations of human rights: political liberty, socio-economic rights, cultural freedom and group rights. Notably, along with a comprehensive provision of social security, the Charter proposed that the mines, the banks and monopoly industries should 'be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole', and that the land should 'be redivided amongst those who work it to banish famine and land hunger'. The democratic vision of the Charter was fully endorsed by the SACP that had accepted the strategy of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) as a preliminary stage that would

lead to socialist revolution. As shown in the fact that Nelson Mandela was a member of the central executive committee of the SACP when he was arrested in 1962,⁷ the communist influence on the formation of the Chartist tradition was undeniable.

However, angry dissidents began to challenge this Chartist agenda because they perceived this mainstream movement to be controlled by a small group of white communists so that the ownership by the African majority was seriously undermined.⁸ The Africanist emotions of the ICU movement had been passed on to Anton Lembede of the Youth League of the ANC in the 1940s (Gerhart 1978, chap. 3), briefly to Mandela and his colleagues, and eventually to Robert Sobukwe, nicknamed 'Professor', the founder of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC). The PAC was launched in 1959 to break away from the ANC, proposing a majoritarian Africanist agenda countering the pluralist, power-sharing agenda enshrined in the Charter (Lodge 1983, chaps 3, 9).

Subsequent to the Sharpeville Massacre in March 1960, both the ANC and the PAC were banned by the apartheid government, a number of respected anti-apartheid leaders including Mandela and Sobukwe were arrested and jailed in the Robben Island, and others went into exile. In the late 1960s, then, the political vacuum created by the repression started to be filled by the new young leadership including Steve Biko, an ex-medical student and the eloquent protagonist of Black Consciousness. Although Biko could not quote directly from the words of the heroes incarcerated in the Robben Island, the intellectual influence especially from Sobukwe was overtly explicit in his writings. 'We knew he [a white man] had no right to be there [in a black man's country]; we wanted to remove him from our table, strip the table of all trappings put on it by him, decorate it in true African style, settle down and then ask him to join us on our own terms if he liked' (Biko 1979, p. 69). This

quintessentially Africanist remark was presented, with irony, as a citation from the statement of Hastings Banda, the President of Malawi, who was widely regarded as a ‘collaborator’ because of his close relationship with apartheid South Africa. Even though the Africanist ideal may have been shared by conservative Mr. Banda, Biko at the time seems to have been inspired more by the writings of Kenneth Kaunda and Sékou Touré, as well as of Caribbean intellectuals like Frantz Fanon and Aimé Césaire. In the 1970s, the Black Consciousness activists were conscious about the connectivity of their movement with the destiny of African liberation. However, the major leaders were rounded up in 1974 for celebrating the victory of Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO) in Mozambique.⁹

All in all, the modern history of the Southern African region is characterised by land dispossession, forced migration and racial capitalism as well as popular resistance to these. In South Africa, given the intensity of daily exposure of black Africans to European values and practices in the political and intellectual spheres, the countervailing Africanist aspirations have periodically resurfaced in liberation politics. The rule of *Bula Matari* continued into the late 20th century in Southern Africa. However, Biko once noted: ‘While it may be relevant now to talk about black in relation to white, we must not make this our preoccupation, for it can be a negative exercise. As we proceed further towards the achievement of our goals let us talk more about ourselves and our struggle and less about whites’ (Biko 1979, p. 98).

Citing the texts of Sobukwe and Biko further, the next section examines the dialectic logic of Africanist thinking that was elaborated to achieve these ultimate goals by addressing the contradictions between Black Africans and people of non-African origins in Africa (Mao 1957/2007).

7.5. A Quest for the Integrated Agency of Africans

Sobukwe and Biko envisioned a future (South) Africa as a place where racial capitalism would be eliminated, racial distinctions would become irrelevant and every person loyal to the destiny of the integrated continent would become an African *not as a group but as an individual*. Contrary to the conventional understanding of Africanism, in Sobukwe's opinion, a white citizen may also be regarded as an African. 'We aim, politically, at government of the Africans by the Africans, for the Africans, with everybody who owes his only loyalty to Afrika and who is prepared to accept the democratic rule of an African majority being regarded as an African. We guarantee no minority rights, because we think in terms of individuals, not groups' (Sobukwe 1959/1977, p. 516).

For Biko, however, a peaceful kingdom of individual Africans will come true only after the struggle around group identities is over. Referring to the Hegelian theorem of dialectic, Biko dynamised the transformative process as 'negation of negation': 'The *thesis* is in fact a strong white racism and therefore, the *antithesis* to this must, *ipso facto*, be a strong solidarity amongst the blacks on whom this white racism seeks to prey. Out of these two situations we can therefore hope to reach some kind of balance – a true humanity where power politics will have no place'. At the end of the journey, '... the "Black Consciousness" approach would be irrelevant in a colourless and non-exploitative egalitarian society' where individuals matter (Biko 1979, pp. 87, 90, italics in original). The ultimate goal of Black Consciousness is the same as that of Sobukwe's Africanism. The difference is the insertion of *antithesis* that would galvanise the radical transformation of South African society. Biko's logic is that, until the friend–enemy relationship fades out in an egalitarian future, society inevitably goes through a tense, prolonged

and yet interim period of group power politics.

Initially, Sobukwe was confident and overtly optimistic about the captivation of an African human ideal: 'I wish to make it clear again that we are anti-nobody. We are pro-Africa. We breathe, we dream, we live Africa; because Africa and humanity are inseparable. It is only by doing the same that the minorities in this land, the European, Coloured and Indian, can secure mental and spiritual freedom' (Sobukwe 1949/1972, p. 335). However, given the harsh repression of the liberation movement in the 1960s and the asymmetric power relations between racially defined groups, the Black Consciousness activists decided to withdraw from 'non-racial' organisations in which they saw 'the whites doing all the talking and the blacks the listening'. Faced with the totality of white power, the only option available to the conscientised Blacks at the time was to disengage from liberal associations and empower themselves. 'Once the various groups within a given community have asserted themselves to the point that mutual respect has to be shown then you have the ingredients for a true and meaningful integration' (Biko 1979, pp. 20–1).

The autonomy of mind was ardently sought for, because 'the most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed' (ibid., pp. 68, 92). In the lexicon of the Black Consciousness movement, the Blacks were defined primarily in terms of 'mental attitude' rather than of pigmentation, because 'the fact we are all *not white* does not necessarily mean that we are all *black*' (ibid., p. 48, italics in original).

In addition to this emphasis on political subjectivity and commitment, the notion of being Black had another dimension of seeking a fusion of culturally distinctive groups within the oppressed majority, whose boundaries had been exploited by the apartheid regime for the clear purpose of divide and rule. By

presenting the fresh, inclusive concept of Black Consciousness, Biko and his fellow activists succeeded in forging a united front of black Africans, Coloureds and Indian South Africans to form a single agency counteracting the white minority rule. The blanket appellation of Blackness was conferred upon all individuals belonging to these groups, and thus, a new identity was being constructed. By redrawing the enemy–friend boundaries, the strategy turned out to be immensely effective in light of the correct handling of contradictions among the South African people, laying the activist groundwork for the broad-based United Democratic Front (UDF) in the 1980s. In a wider context, the historical division among Black South Africans bore some resemblance to the situations surrounding Indians in Uganda and Zanzibaris in Tanzania. The politics of unity under Black Consciousness disclosed African potentials to mitigate the exclusive tendency of conventional Africanist discourses, as an Asian in Africa is entitled to become an authentic Black person in this countervailing politics. Furthermore, Biko wanted to put an end to the ‘tribal’ strife among Black Africans, and harshly criticised Bantustan leaders such as Mangosuthu Buthelezi of Kwa-Zulu homeland, although the call was meant for their return to the original cause (Biko 1979, pp. 81–6).

The emancipatory dreams of Sobukwe and Biko were premised on the unified agency of Africans or Blacks to which all oppressed people were invited to affirm loyalty. The integrated agency was expected to rise against racial capitalism and the colonial legacy and to contribute to the formation of a single African nation, or symbolically, the reinstatement of ‘Azania’, originally a name of coastal East Africa in the ancient times (Huntingford ed. 1980). Implicitly, however, this process of interpellation that was to construct new subjects did not allow recourse to intermediary

organisations based on ethnicity, race or other identity markers. The rise of the single liberatory agency would leave little room for retaining those identities in the public political space in parallel with rigid secularism that emerged in Europe in the wake of the French Revolution. In contrast with the vision of intergroup equality in the Freedom Charter, the Africanist dream did not assume that a 'partial' identity would provide a route to reach the holistic identity.

The conventional understanding is like this: the Freedom Charter envisioned a free South Africa in which black Africans, Asians, Coloureds, whites and all their subgroups would share power on equal terms, while Africanists determinedly refused the participation of white individuals, the descendants of European settlers, in the liberation movement of the majority Africans. However, as long as the discourse of the finest leaders was concerned, what was in question was not the scope of participation of given identity groups but rather the differences in their approaches towards the dynamics of group formation. The Chartists made room for the realisation of partial aspirations of existing identity groups as the first step towards a total liberation of the nation, and this process should be navigated by a small dedicated vanguard group of all races. In contrast, the Africanists demanded the confirmation of integrationist identity, be it African or Black, and the individual loyalty to a larger African nation was considered the very precondition of any form of human liberation. In other words, the first step to resolve group antagonism was *co-existence* in the former, and *fusion* in the latter. In these pluralist and integrationist approaches, the sequences were polar opposite even though their dreams of the abolition of racial capitalism resonated.

7.6. Sharing Power: The Triumph of a Chartist Dream?

As the negotiation for a radical regime transition came into sight in South Africa, the gravity of political activism started to shift from the Africanist ideal towards the Chartist agenda of national liberation. First, after the ruthless repression of the Black Consciousness movement in the 1970s, the ANC and the SACP consolidated their organisational influence on the domestic anti-apartheid forces including the burgeoning trade unions in the 1980s. Second, the political forces calling for segmental ethnic freedom within South Africa, notably the Afrikaner and Zulu nationalists, insisted on their political autonomy, which had to be accommodated in a post-apartheid regime in some realistic way. Third, economic liberalism that considered apartheid a form of irrational market intervention gained momentum among the three major South African industrial sectors, i.e. mining, agriculture and manufacturing, which preferred a unified national economy without the rigid regulations imposed on African labour (Lipton 1986). Consequently, the transitional politics in South Africa turned out to be framed by the agenda of power sharing among identity groups within the unitary boundary of South Africa.

Faced with cumulative effects of township revolts, stayaways called by trade unions, Zimbabwe's independence in 1980, the wars in the Frontline States culminating in the battle of Cuito Cuanavale in Angola in 1987–88 as well as international sanction and economic crisis, the National Party government decided to abandon the apartheid rule by the end of the 1980s by legitimating liberation movements, releasing Mandela and allowing the independence of Namibia in 1990, as well as by engaging in multi-party negotiations to sort out a new political dispensation. In the course of cutthroat bargaining, the post-apartheid government in South Africa emerged eventually as a federation of all major political forces and cultural

groups including the white minority, marking the new era of power-sharing. The South African Government of National Unity (GNU) was established in 1994, headed by President Mandela with the leader of the National Party, F.W. de Klerk, as one of his Deputy Presidents.¹⁰ The new Constitution of South Africa promulgated in 1996 contains the comprehensive Bill of Rights and is regarded as one of the most progressive constitutions in the world. The text of the Constitution is infused with the spirit of the Freedom Charter of 1955.

It is clear that the GNU embodied the principle of power sharing by all racial and ethnic groups nurtured in the Chartist tradition. The GNU was featured by a constitutionally guaranteed coalition of all major political parties for a limited period, the proportional representation (PR) system and the devolution of executive power to provincial governments and major municipalities. The new national executive was to be composed of politicians from major identity groups including the Afrikaner and Zulu nationalists.

The enfranchisement of the Black majority might be enough to meet Biko's precondition for 'a true meaningful integration', a synthesis of dialectic confrontations. Under the principle of one-man one-vote, Black-African South Africans (nearly 80 per cent of the population) and the even larger population of 'Blacks' (nearly 90 per cent with Coloureds and Indians) were entitled to wield enormous political power by force of number, and the state was widely expected to implement redistribution policies based on the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), the ANC's election manifesto, to empower people economically. Despite the warning of Mamdani (1996, p. 294) against a Nigerian-style federal solution, decentralised despotism did not materialise in post-apartheid South Africa. The geographic dispersion of white settlers throughout the country, as well as the

nationalist ideology shared by most political forces, left and right alike, has contributed to maintaining the unitary South African state.¹¹

Within the unitary framework, the GNU after 1994 took the form of exemplary power sharing among major political parties to which people cast their votes largely according to their racial and ethnic identities. The first cabinet of the GNU was composed of politicians representing all racial and ethnic groups, and as such, the vision of the Freedom Charter appeared to have been finally realised. While the institutional prescription of power sharing for South Africa was put forward by Arend Lijphart, the influential Dutch-American political scientist (Lijphart 1977, 1985), conceptions of power sharing in political theory originated in political pluralism propounded by Fabian socialists such as Harold Laski and G.D.H. Cole.¹² The key Fabian literature that greatly influenced Lijphart was *Politics in West Africa* written by the Caribbean economist, W.A. Lewis, who served as economic adviser to Kwame Nkrumah with his political counterpart, George Padmore. What Lewis proposed for post-independent West African nations was a combination of grand coalition, proportionality and decentralisation (federalism or provincial devolution), which foretold the South African GNU in all these three elements. 'National loyalty cannot immediately supplant tribal loyalty; it has to be built on top of tribal loyalty by creating a system in which all the tribes feel that there is room for self-expression' (Lewis 1965, p. 68; see also Mine 2006). In this political prescription for West African newly independent nations, Lewis envisioned a future Africa in which ethnic units would gradually coalesce into a nation, and nations to a larger unit, through sharing and dispersing power.

In so far as being forced to share power with an enemy is frustrating and can be blatantly unjust, power sharing was often a

naturally preferred practice in African polities. ‘The tribe has made its decisions by discussion, in much the way that coalitions function; this kind of democratic procedure is at the heart of the original institutions of the [West African] people’ (Lewis 1965, p. 86). As an Akan proverb says, ‘Power is like holding an egg in the hand. If you hold it too tightly it breaks, and if you hold it too loosely, it drops’ (Iliffe 2007, p. 72). In Africa, historically, political power tended to be dispersed as long as land was relatively abundant. If power was not shared by major players carefully, dissidents would simply bundle off to open frontiers (see Chapter 1 of this volume). A chief was therefore always expected to demonstrate his even-handedness and inclusiveness *vis-à-vis* his subjects. In this connection, the role played by Mandela in post-apartheid nation building in South Africa was similar to the one played by the leopard-skin chief described in Evans-Pritchard’s classic, *The Nuer* (1940).

Intriguingly, however, nearly forty years after the split of the PAC Africanists from the ANC Chartists, the official symbolic discourse of the ANC-led government occasionally returns to an all-embracing Africanist idea reminiscent of Sobukwe’s. In his formal statement on the adoption of the new Constitution in 1996, President Thabo Mbeki, the successor to Mandela, declared on a high note, ‘I am African’, referring carefully to historical experiences of each element of the South African population including the Khoisan people, Asian slaves and Afrikaners, thereby implying that all groups including minorities could become ‘Africans’ in the new South African nation, now being considered an integral part of the African continent (Mbeki 1998). Politically, the ANC government after apartheid seems to be navigating between the two currents of racial/ethnic pluralism and African integrationism, keeping the definition of Africanness ambiguous.

Power sharing combined with decentralised decision making have contributed to preventing the escalation of violent conflict in African countries other than South Africa. The South African GNU was not the first but the second major attempt at power sharing in the region. The Lancaster House regime of Zimbabwe that enabled independence in 1980 was the first full-scale attempt at institutional power sharing in Southern Africa, leaving frustration over the delay in land reform and economic transformation. Following the South African example, then, the term of ‘GNU’ has been used formally and informally in a number of African countries including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d’Ivoire, Burundi, Sudan, Kenya and Zimbabwe to describe ad hoc power sharing, or a grand coalition, formed by warring parties often as an outcome of elite bargaining. At least in the short run, such power-sharing experiments have been effective in forestalling and putting a lid on violent ruptures of society. Prominent people’s intervention has often been catalytic to power-sharing arrangements. For example, Nyerere and Mandela played leading roles to negotiate power sharing in Burundi (Bentley and Southall 2005), and post-election power-sharing arrangements in Kenya and Zimbabwe were also negotiated through the agency of regional stakeholders.

7.7. The Limit of Compromise

In the last instance, both the pluralist power-sharing arrangements and its opposite, the integrationist majoritarian rule, are no more than two institutional variants of liberal democracy, but this distinction can be of critical importance in the politics of hegemony. The majoritarian electoral system based on the first-past-the-post (FPTP) system may deprive both rich and poor minorities of the chance to be politically represented, and this

exclusion also applies to relatively small parliamentary left parties. The FPTP system may excite fear in the defeated, as a political party that has succeeded in securing a parliamentary majority often monopolises influential government posts and penalises the electorate who have voted for a 'wrong' party. As shown in the election-related violence in many African countries, this zero-sum situation is manifested in the case of a presidential election, which is fought in a large, single nationwide constituency.

The majoritarian system could be favourable to the majority party in South Africa, the ANC, in consolidating its power basis and addressing the legacy of apartheid. However, the ANC and its allies compromised in the time-bound power-sharing arrangements that would allow for minority party survival, the PR system in decision-making bodies, the protection of the status of white civil servants in service, as well as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) that would grant amnesty to the perpetrators of apartheid crimes in exchange for the full disclosure of truth (see Chapter 6 of this book).

Those compromises were made following a strategic proposition by Joe Slovo, the Lithuanian-born leader of the SACP, in the middle of multi-party negotiations. The purpose of those 'qualitative compromises' was to make representatives of the old regime a part of the new regime, thereby pre-empting a likely insurgence of the apartheid army and police to overthrow the new government, based on a recognition that 'we were clearly not dealing with a defeated enemy' (Slovo 1992). At the time, in connivance with the apartheid security forces, Zulu nationalists violently attacked ANC supporters and the casualties of political violence amounted to 16,022 from 1990 to 1994 (SAIRR 1996, p. 52). The threat to derail the negotiation process and overthrow a democratic government was real.

Concerning the electoral system, under the Tripartite Alliance with the ANC and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), the SACP could assert influence by means of placing its members on the ANC's list of PR candidates and canvassing votes for the ANC. Although constitutional engineering is only a part of the story, a certain shape of institution may become a proximate cause of uncontrollable violent confrontations at a critical juncture. Issues such as electoral system, quota system, formal recognition of traditional cultures and federal arrangements should not be simply dismissed as digressionary. A choice of formal political system may exert critical influence on future trajectories of power relations by setting rules for political games.

At the same time, it must be remembered that formal power sharing has its own negative aspects in the longer terms. First, a rigid institutionalisation of power sharing is likely to cement the boundaries of cultural groups, encourage parochialism and reach a stalemate in decision making.¹³ An exemplary institution of power sharing including ethnic quota systems was vigorously introduced in Burundi after the Arusha Accord in 2000 as an extension of the South African experience. Although this arrangement has succeeded in containing ethnic mobilisation, ethnic identification is institutionally reproduced, and a fierce power struggle is taking place outside the formal institutions (Takeuchi, 2013). The case for ad hoc power sharing should not be based on the essentialist understanding of ethnicity and identity, but on practical considerations to find a short-term refuge from pressing political tensions in which group identity is materially given. In the longer term, the constructivist approach to identity politics is an absolute requisite.¹⁴

Second, the continuance of formal power sharing may entrench the elite pact, thereby aggravating inequalities between a coalition

of the ethnic, racial, religious and/or capitalist elite and the excluded majority of underclass. In South Africa, the class differentiation within the Black African population has widened noticeably after the abolishment of apartheid, and the Africanist discourse of Mbeki was criticised as merely representing ‘poor Africans symbolically, while putting them off economically’ (MacDonald 2006, p. 133). As radical transformation including land reforms tends to go slowly because of the introduction of the neoliberal market principle to government programmes, the human landscape of the South African countryside has not changed as drastically as expected, leaving the rural poor unempowered.¹⁵

Combining political and socio-economic rights, the Freedom Charter aspired to realise *both* peaceful co-existence of identity groups and radical redistribution of economic resources. However, in post-apartheid South Africa, although group co-existence has been achieved to a significant degree, the quest for economic justice was placed on ice. As vividly described in Klein (2007, chap. 10), the proposed redistributive economic policies had been thwarted by behind-the-door elite negotiations between the ANC politicians and the business sector in the early 1990s. The growing significance of the class factor is viscerally recognised by the masses. In perception surveys in which the present author engaged in Cape Town in 2010, 82 per cent of Africans (residents at Khayelitsha and Langa), 71 per cent of Coloureds (residents at Mitchells Plain, Athlone and Bo-Kaap) and 23 per cent of whites (residents at Durbanville and other suburbs) strongly agreed with the statement: ‘the class division between the rich and the poor is becoming more serious than racial discrimination’ (Mine 2013, pp. 115–7). Without due attention to class differentiation, both the power-sharing and the Africanist agenda cannot help reaching an impasse. In South Africa, the pluralist ideal of the Freedom Charter, as well as the

integrationist synthesis Biko and his fellows envisioned, has been only partially fulfilled as another contradiction, the class division across the racial lines, looms large. The majority is seething with frustration and dissatisfaction.

7.8. By Way of Conclusion: The African Unity as a Model for Asia

As the Nigerian political scientist, Claude Ake, argued in criticising the classic work on comparative politics by Almond and Powell, the implicit and explicit norms of evolutionary state building, such as structural differentiation and cultural secularisation, are abstracted from the features of the Western political systems. In this way, the political development 'translates to westernisation and the pursuit of development becomes a matter of making the developing country more like the West' (Ake 1982, p. 140; Almond and Powell 1966). We cannot claim the absolute superiority of pluralist power sharing over integrationist majority rule, nor provision a convergence of African political systems to a certain type of idealised system. Although a comparative advantage of institutional power sharing is recognisable in short-term conflict resolution, this arrangement is only one of several possible forms of democratic national governments. There are alternative combinations of medicine from which one may choose.

Africa is huge and diverse. Along with a wealth of biosystems on the continent, people's livelihoods, values, cultures as well as political experiences differ from place to place. Resonating with Kwame Nkrumah, Sobukwe dreamed of 'the United States of Africa, with all power vested in a central government, freely elected by the whole Continent on the basis of adult suffrage. In such a set-up, only continental-wide political parties committed to a

continental programme cutting across sectional ties and interests, whether of a tribal or of a religious nature, are possible' (Sobukwe 1960/1977, p. 563). However, today, it has become incontestable that the complex political economy of the continent cannot be managed in such a centralised decision-making system. Probably, it is at this wider regional level that the absolute advantage of power sharing is established. Power sharing at the centre combined with decentralisation of power to local units fits in well with the political governance of big organisations: continental/regional organisations and relatively big federal states. The vision of pan-Africanism should be anchored in nation states as organic parts of a federation, not least because the national governments are the only units, for the moment, empowered to execute substantial policies on economic, political and cultural fronts (Mkandawire 2011). A challenge faced by national governments is to implement progressive redistribution policies while achieving political and cultural inclusiveness, which is always a tightrope act.

In closing this chapter, let us turn our eyes to East Asia. The politics of consensus among colour nations entrenched in the African Union (AU), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and other African regional organisations is noticeably missing in East Asia, where historically influential nations have shared an ethnocentric view of the world: the civilised centre being surrounded by barbarian peripheries.¹⁶ Although this notion originated in China as prototypical sinocentrism as early as the time of Confucius, the very mode of a hierarchical understanding of geopolitical space spread into Korea, Japan and Vietnam with each assuming itself as the civilised centre to varying degrees. In the East Asian region where land has been relatively scarce, strong states capturing people had established their presence long before the era of Western colonialism. While pan-Asian

conceptions comparable to pan-Africanism have been presented by several Asian thinkers, their thoughts and practices have largely been sidelined in regional history in the shadow of contests for hegemony, as described by Yoshimi Takeuchi (2005) in the contexts of Japanese military expansionism. Without a workable framework of regional political coordination, the revived dynamics of economic integration in today's East Asia is being hampered by territorial rivalries. The present Asian situation is in stark contrast with the recent economic troubles in institutionally integrated Europe.

It is Africans who come to the rescue. If Africa succeeds to bring up a stable and prospering continent-wide community, sharing and dispersing political power and pre-empting serious violent conflicts, such an endeavour will provide an invaluable model for the peace in East Asia. Given that Asia is for the moment politically divided against itself the African experiences of conflict resolution in micro and macro spaces are expected to provide Asians with invaluable opportunities for learning based on the principle of reciprocity. Although the agenda of South-South solidarity propounded in Bandung, Indonesia, in 1955 has eventually been sidelined in 20th century global politics, it must be still of great value for us to track back to the bifurcation point, as we do when we get lost in the forest. The attempt to strengthen national capacities for conflict resolution should be effectively supplemented by cooperation at the regional level, avoiding the trap of destructive proliferation of friend-enemy relationships between and across national boundaries.

Notes

¹ Nigel Gibson presents an imaginative revaluation of Frantz Fanon's

legacy of liberatory humanism but does not take much account of the lived reality of violence in colonial situations (Gibson 2003, 2011).

² See also the notion of ‘cooperative conflict’ presented in Drèze and Sen (1989). A typical case is gender relations and intrafamily divisions in which the conflict elements are often kept hidden by dint of subjective perceptions (pp. 11–2, 47–50).

³ It is inappropriate to accentuate Southern African exceptionalism too much. For example, the historical experience of the Mau Mau movement in Kenya was very much in parallel with the struggle for land in Southern Africa (Kinyatti ed. 1987).

⁴ For the implications of social anthropology in the development of ideas and practices of racial segregation during the inter-war period, see Dubow (1989). In *A Handbook of Tswana Laws and Custom*, Isaac Schapera provided a detailed account of norms and rules of Tswana society in today’s Botswana but failed to work out the dynamics of their change (Schapera 1938).

⁵ These two organisations were called South African Native National Congress (SANNC) and Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) respectively at the time of their inauguration.

⁶ For the full text of the Freedom Charter, see the website of the ANC: <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=72> (last accessed 15 September 2015).

⁷ *Business Day*, 6 December 2013. Mandela’s membership was kept secret at the time due to ‘political reasons’. It is also said that all defendants of the Rivonia Trial were party members.

⁸ Around the same time, a similar warning against a ‘communist way of white domination’ was sounded in Padmore (1956).

⁹ Despite the fact that the aspirations for pan-African liberation were manifest in Biko’s writings, the contemporary reappraisals of Biko’s thought have paid little attention to this aspect (Pityana et al. eds 1991; Chipkin 2007; Mngxitama et al. eds 2008; Gibson 2011; Mangcu 2012).

¹⁰ The two events of April 1994 in Africa, the genocide in Rwanda and the non-racial elections in South Africa, are often contrasted as the typical case of ‘tribal’ regression and the exemplary rise to ‘Western’ liberal democracy in a simplistic way (Cooper 2002, chap. 1). It is forgotten that South Africa had been on the brink of total civil war until the elections took place in April 1994. The South African case could be more

adequately compared with the violent disintegration of Yugoslavia in the same period.

¹¹ It must be noted that Afrikaner nationalism developed with an anti-imperialist 'South Africa First' agenda calling for a national autonomy from the British Empire.

¹² The Chinese political scientist, Hsiao Kung Chuan, presented a comprehensive stocktaking study of monism and pluralism in Western political theories of the state. See Hsiao (1927).

¹³ There is a plethora of literature on the pros and cons of power sharing. For example, Roeder and Rothchild eds (2005) reject power sharing and put forward the agenda of 'power-division', the ideal of James Madison enshrined in the US Constitution.

¹⁴ According to Slovo, 'the Marxist theory of the national question is perhaps the least developed in our revolutionary science' (Slovo 1988, p. 142). 'The consolidation or fragmentation of disparate ethnic groups into one or into several sovereign entities cannot be judged by any universal formulas as to what constitutes a nation' (ibid., p. 144). Here, criticising Stalin, Slovo may have thought of the Austromarxist approach to nation and nationalism.

¹⁵ This polarisation of Black society in South Africa is making the classic problem of petty bourgeois come to the fore. Analysing German and Italian fascism, Poulantzas characterised the petty-bourgeois ideology as a combination of status-quo anti-capitalism, aspirations to upward social mobility and the power fetishism (Poulantzas 1970/1979, p. 241). But the attitudes of this intermediary class may radically shift as presignified by Amílcar Cabral's invitation to 'prisoners of cultural and social contradictions of their lives' to 'return to the source' (Cabral 1972, p. 62).

¹⁶ One of the most classic works on the regional tributary system centring on China is Fairbank ed. (1968).

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Potential of African Philosophy in Conflict Resolution and Peace-building

Zvakanyorwa Wilbert Sadomba

8.1. Introduction

Come to think of it, there is no culture that omits ways of dealing with extremities of human relations such as violent conflicts with potential threat of decimating the whole society to extinction. By the same token there is no society that would fail to devise ways of sustaining peaceful co-existence between individuals, communities and peoples. Religion, customs, rituals, beliefs, values, social organisation, politics, education and other social functions seem to have a common thread running through, a common factor – to manage conflicts in order to sustain peace. Conflict resolution mechanisms are present even in cannibalistic societies and this quality is not exclusive to human society. Animals also, need a certain level of conflict management to sustain peace among their group members and communities because always conflicts erupt and they need to be controlled efficiently and timely before they degenerate to devour the whole society to extinction. Conflict management is an underlying cultural condition for symbiosis.

It therefore boggles the mind that such cultural potentials are burst asunder in modern day conflict management and peace building in the interest of expediency. Considering that Africa has had the longest history and experience of human life on this planet there is little doubt that the art of conflict resolution and sustenance

of peace must have been well developed over the several millennia despite major interruptions such as slavery and colonisation, yet this fact is systematically ignored by global players of conflict resolution and peace building. This chapter argues and illustrates that the art of conflict management and peace building is actually highly developed and perfected in Africa that it goes beyond the confines of conference rooms and lecture theatres that dominate the knowledge arena now. The art is culturally embedded, reflecting the cosmology, religion and philosophical practices of the particular people, as we shall see in this chapter.

Conflict resolution and peace building are often concepts that are defined by regional and international protocols far removed from local people who are engaged in the process. This approach has a tendency of imposing worldviews that are inimical to local perceptions and thought patterns. Wiredu (1996, p. 60) argues that:

Contemporary African experience is marked by a certain intellectual anomaly. The African today ... lives in a ... confused interplay between an indigenous cultural heritage and a foreign cultural legacy of a colonial origin ... [T]his cultural amalgam is the superimposition of Western conceptions of the good upon African thought and conduct.

Superimposition of Western thought patterns negates the very basis of conflict resolution and peace building in Africa. Whereas conflict and its resolution should largely be an introspective cognitive reflection, it becomes an extroverted mechanical process giving precedence to externally set procedures. Categories of conflict and peace are not grounded in the people's own perceptions and social practice. Alien ideas and concepts of resolving conflict and building peace cannot be internalised and therefore can hardly provide a sustainable solution. Imposed social

practices lack transformative powers that are required for long-lasting change to human relationships.

The Western world today derides African philosophical thought and therefore fails to adequately consider it in the pursuit of peace yet relied-upon Western thinking has glaring epistemic weaknesses. First, it is reductionist in nature, seeing the cosmos as a disintegrated whole with the human being at the centre, 'objectifying the universe' (Ani 1994, p. 45). Second, being scientific, it prunes itself of spirituality and therefore has a partial understanding of the cosmos itself. Ani (1994, p. 45) exposes the weaknesses thus:

We, as humans, are not whole beings, but rather made up of parts that are in continual conflict with one another. We are made up of 'reason', 'intellect', and our 'better natures' which are constantly seeking to control our desires, appetites, emotions and to put our 'senses' to proper use. The better part must control the 'baser' ... Plato 'discovered' the 'psyche' that came to refer to the 'isolated, thinking self'. The self was no longer conceived as a cosmic being that is, a being that experienced itself as intimately involved with other beings of the cosmos. A 'cosmic self' implies that the reality of self is phenomenally part of other realities presented as a result of the sentient, conscious, and spiritual coexistence in the universe.

This chapter describes African cosmology as based on a tripartite relationship of nature, the spirit world and human society and illustrates its significance in social, political and economic practice.

8.2. A Note on Methodology

This chapter is more than two decades of reflection on African philosophy beginning when I engaged indigenous knowledge systems in water, sanitation and environmental management programmes. I used an anthropological approach in gathering data. First I worked with communities and at times lived in their midst in the Beit Bridge, Masvingo and Chimanimani districts of Zimbabwe.

However this approach was not confined to these geographical sites as I went further to explore African philosophy in Zimbabwe by carrying out in-depth interviews with spirit mediums, land revolutionaries and elders. I also explored this philosophy through Christian churches that are founded on African traditions and practices like Johanne Masowe Chishanu and Mugodhi. They believe in the complexity of the spirit world and seek to solve problems unique to African spirituality through Christian practices. I became a participant observer since 1998, working with ‘prophets’ and spiritual healers. I even got exposed to spiritual experiences including exorcising and communing with the spirit world myself.

This experience has given me a deeper understanding of African spirituality and the way it is articulated in solving real problems of life. The materials used here are based on this long period of research and will be presented more fully in a forthcoming book, *Stubborn Ghost of Alword: How Inferior Western Destroys Superior African – Agriculture* (Sadomba, forthcoming).

8.3. The Spirit World

Zimbabwe has experienced a robust, centralised and widespread religion that has affected a great part of the southern African region. Chigwedere (1985, p. 10) writes:

I see no other country in Africa that has a centralised religious hierarchy such as Zimbabwe has and influencing a region as big as from the Zambezi to the Transvaal across the Limpopo, and from Mozambique to Botswana.

Indigenous religious philosophy of Zimbabwe depicts a complex agro-ecological religion that has prevailed since time immemorial along other religions such as Christianity and Muslim in a very distinct form. Its main tenet is the monotheist structure of its organisation. Gelfand (1973, p. 133) argues that the ‘most distinctive feature of Shona familial monotheism is the medium and ... the belief in possession’. This is common in many parts of the continent of Africa in general (Ramose 1999). This religion is composed of a spirit world with various structures, categories of being and complex patterns. The world is understood to occupy spiritual space with a mode of existence that is different from nature and the physical world but ‘fused’ into each other. As such in this belief system there is no real division between the two worlds. Spirits roam the physical world albeit occupying spiritual space (Okri 1993). Spirits are not remote and distant. This proximity creates a strong bond between and amongst the society, nature and the spirit world. The action of one against the other is considered effective and immediate.

8.3.1. Types of Spirits according to Cosmology in Zimbabwe

The existence in the spirit world includes but is not limited to animal and human spirits. Animal spirits mimic the various species of animals in nature. It is illustrative that animal spirits are considered also to assume a more pure mode of existence than any mortals. It is this purity of form that accords spirits of both humans and animals a position senior to that of mortals. Mortal humans can

be controlled by animal spirits despite their tremendous powers over fauna in physical nature.

Human spirits have a structure and special functions that are cascaded and duplicated in the material social world. In fact according to this cosmology, the social world acquires most of its attributes from the spirit world including political structures, the law and morality (Gelfand 1973, p. 111). According to this belief system mortals die to occupy spiritual space, joining that complex organisation.

First it is a very hierarchical structure with strict attention to seniority. This seniority is dependent on who was born first in the mortal world before joining the spirits. Each 'family' is organised according to this hierarchy with the male progenitors (in patrilineal societies) or female (in matrilineal societies) marking various levels and generations of the departed, thereby creating a continuum from mortality to immortality. There is a very thin line between the *midzimu* family spirits referred to as 'spirit elders' (Bourdillon 1976, p. 199) and the mortal family members. Death itself is not considered a sufficient transformative process to separate the two worlds and forms of being. Life goes on even when the person is no more. The 'attribution of life to a deceased person in recognition of the belief that personhood is much more and larger than the physical body is expressed in African traditional thought as the living-dead' (Ramose 1999, p. 84).

These spirits are distinct in that they are of a particular family structure with direct links to the family of mortal society. A number of these families, associated by kinship ties, would form what has been classified as the clan. It is significant to note that each head of family eventually becomes the head of the clan as it (clan) continuously expands with each live birth in mortal society and death to join ancestral spirits. The head of the clan eventually becomes the dynastic head, a position difficult to hold in the mortal

world because of splits and divisions resulting from social and political conflicts. It is however important to note that according to this belief, this hierarchy does not per se bother about the dynastic position of the progenitor as he is only recognised as the founder of 'the' family despite its many other branches. This has a binding factor when the widely extended families are taken into consideration. All are from one founder and they have the same *totem*.

There are also professional spirits called *mashave*. These are not connected by blood to the family structures that they might occupy or influence. In most cases they are spirits denied entry into *nyikadzimu* where untainted ancestral spirits reside. The rejected spirit does not have a choice but to roam spiritual space desperately searching for a host. It usually forces itself onto an unsuspecting individual by causing sustained illness until the victim seeks healing and the diviner informs him/her about the *shave* intentions. The victim however has the right to reject the *shave* in which case it eventually leaves. If the individual accepts to host, a spiritual contract is drawn outlining rights and obligations of both parties. For example the *shave* promises to perform professional duties like *kurapa* (healing), *kuvbima* (hunting), *kuroya* (witchcraft) ¹, *kuba* (thieving) or *kurima* (farming) depending on its field of speciality or its talent. The host promises to brew beer yearly for the *shave* to make merry, in consideration. This choice cannot be exercised with one's *mudzimu* (ancestral spirits). This contract is drawn through a ritual ceremony that is performed specifically to accept and appease the spirit of the foreigner. Then on, the parties specifically perform their respective parts of the agreement. As can be seen above, *shave* spirits can be negative, dangerous and evil or they can perform economic tasks. This is why, the victim has a choice to reject or accept.

Another type of a spirit stranger is the *ngozi* (avenging spirit). This is spirit of a murdered victim that engages in a vengeful feat to indiscriminately punish the blood members of the murderer. There is no choice as long as the blood running through the veins is genetically related to that of the murderer.

At the apex of this world is the highest spirit called *Mwari* (Creator), *Musikavanhu* (Creator of humans), *Mukulunkulu* (the Most High) or simply *Mwali*. Between mortal society and God, there are numerous spirits that play different roles and affect mortals differently (Schoffeleers 1979). John Mbiti (1969, p. 75) had long observed that ‘spirits in general belong to the ontological mode of existence between God and man ... subdivided into divinities, associates of God, ordinary spirits and the living-dead’.

The spirit world is understood to have its own internal dynamics, levels of seniority and variegated impact on humans. It is also a world characterised by contradictions thereby demanding caution when dealing with it. Spirits ‘act in malicious ways, as well as in a benevolent manner ... they assume different shapes like human, animal, plant forms or inanimate objects’ (Mbiti 1969, p. 81).

8.3.2. Powers and Functions of Spirits over Humans

The spirit world exercises powers and performs certain functions over mortal beings. Some spirits seek to destroy humans as a form of punishment (e.g. *ngozi* (avenging spirits) and *varoyi* (witch spirits)). Others like *midzimu* (ancestral spirits) protect their progeny and seek to propagate the genealogy. Yet others perform both functions. Some professions from this world are evil (e.g. *shave reuroyi* (witchcraft spirit) yet others are good, e.g. *shave rekuvhima* (hunting spirit)). The spirits also have various relations between and amongst each other. As a result, it is believed that a person possessed by *shave reuroyi* (witchcraft spirit) cannot harm another

without first seeking permission from the ancestors of the potential victim. The pattern is complex and endless. But suffice it to say that the spirit world is understood to be above the human society and it ‘controls’ human beings (Sadomba and Zinyemba, 2015)² and not vice versa.

(1) The *ngozi*³ (avenging spirit)

When a person is killed by anyone for whatever reason, mortal beings cease to have finality over the crime as this is a spiritual matter. The spirit of the deceased victim makes a report of the nature of death to its ancestral spirits who in turn take it by stages until it reaches the apex, God. A decision to avenge is given and the spirit of the victim is given powers to wreck havoc in the clan of the perpetrator mostly causing mysterious deaths but also mental problems, physical disabilities and inexplicable illnesses. The viciousness differs according to the gender and family position. The viciousness of the avenging spirit of a murdered married woman is unprecedented as captured in the proverb, ‘*Ngozi yemuzvere igandanzara, inosiya musha waparara*’ meaning, ‘the feminine avenging spirit has high appetite; it only subsides when a whole clan is wiped out’. The same applies to concealed murder.

It is believed that the only way to appease the spirit of *ngozi* is restitution involving ‘payment’ of specific economic and social items to the victim’s family in settlement. These include beasts on hoof (*mombe dzinotsika*) and a girl, supposed to bear children for the victim’s clan in replacement of the lost life. The girl’s marital status changes to ‘wife of the avenging spirit’ (*mukadzi wengozi*) and she should not have any other conjugal relationships other than this restitution. This whole process is known as *kuripa ngozi* (restitution) with a lot of rituals and supplications, social and spiritual negotiations until relationships are restored to normalcy.

Ngozi, being a spiritual crime the jurisdiction of which transcends mortal society, is suffered as long as the spirit world classifies particular death as murder and most killings, if not any, are. This means that even in circumstances of war, where normally killing each other is a political affair, the particular killing has to be just confined to self-defence otherwise it is murder if it fails to meet the spiritual test. For example if one kills a prisoner of war the *ngozi* avenging spirit rises. If an opponent surrenders under the pressure of battle and the victor overzealously kills the victim, *ngozi* ensues. Even death by unorthodox means of indiscriminate poisoning attracts the wrath of *ngozi* (avenging spirit).

(2) *Territorial spirits and environmental governance*

At the clan and dynastic levels of spirits, territorial dominion is exercised. These powers originate from autochthony through a ritual called *kupinga nyika* that is discussed more fully below. At this position ancestral spirits are divine law givers and setters of moral codes. They define the relationship between nature and society and outline the broad morality that guides conscience and shapes relationships between and amongst mortal individuals. All these are codified into spiritual laws with the approval of the highest spirit, *Musikavanhu*. Codification means that there are spiritual courts that preside over spiritual crimes and specific punishment is given for law breaking. The *ngozi* avenging spirit is one good example of how such spiritual laws operate.

An important spiritual function relates to environmental management. According to this cosmology, the land and its fruits are not surrendered to human beings for them to dominate as suggested by Lockean philosophy (Wood 1984). Rather, the property in land is not transferred to the mortal beings and it remains in the ownership of the autochthonous individuals who performed the *kupinga nyika* ritual, which is a process of presenting

the specific land to one's own ancestral spirits and to get the assent of God to have dominion over that territory (Sadomba 2014; Sadomba, forthcoming).

The autochthonous individual is spiritually declared custodian of that territory. At this point rules of governance are given by the immortal autochthon to the descendent administrator with God's assent. These become territorial laws defining relationships between nature and society, the violation of which is beyond human jurisdiction. The territorial spirits punish lawbreakers and this can be collective, depending on the gravity of the crime.

For example, if there is widespread murder (*kuponda*), incest (*makunakuna*) or intrusion into nature, the whole territory might experience long spells of droughts, pestilence or disease. The impurities of the human mind and behaviour will not change this custody and set rules. The clan or dynasty might be conquered and the territory lost to invaders but custody and spiritual laws are perpetual, subjecting also the invaders without discrimination. These are the laws which freedom fighters sought to understand and follow in the liberation war (see Lan 1985; Flower 1987; Sadomba 2008, 2011).

(3) *Family (ancestral) spirits*

Family spirits, also coined the names, 'the living dead' (Mbiti 1969; Ramose 1999) and 'spirit elders' (Gelfand 1973; Bourdillon 1976) have the most direct relationship and highest interaction with mortal individuals. They guide, protect, warn, reward and punish deviants by withdrawing their support depending on the circumstances. They are the first port of call for the individual in communing with the spirit world. Gelfand (1973, p. 115) concludes that the 'kinship system thus rests on the cult of the spirit elders. This cult makes the living kin and the dead a united whole. The

living and the dead are one family'. Kwasi Wiredu (1996, pp. 48–9) devotes significant space to explain ancestral spirits, saying.

... ancestors are conceived of as persons who continue to be members of their pre-mortem families, watching over their affairs and generally helping them. They are regarded as persons, but not as mortal persons, for they have tasted death and transcended it ... For this reason they are supposed to be more powerful than mortals ... they are considered to be more irreversibly moral than any living mortal. All these attributes are taken to entitle the ancestors to genuine reverence ... in view of their presumed power to promote human well-being, they are approached with considerable respect.

Ancestral spirits are not biased and corrupt as this world is generally. When, therefore, they protect an individual, it is only when that individual has not wronged others. If the individual so harms his/her neighbour, ancestral spirits will remove their protection for punishment to be given against their own (Bourdillon 1976; Gelfand 1973, p. 121). The individual is obliged to live a modest life free from frailty and provocation, with due care not to harm others and the environment for the ancestral spirits to reciprocate by protection and rewards. This is the *Unhu (Ubuntu)* philosophy which gives restrained freedom, rights with obligations, to individuals.

(4) *Spiritual conduct within the family*

Family conduct and individual behaviour can attract the wrath of ancestral spirits. For example wronging a mother, even by verbal abuse, invites the spiritual *kutanda botso* punishment.⁴ Clad in tatters, the wrongdoer goes around the village (area of the crime), with a begging bowl for his/her food, then for millet with which to brew supplication beer for appeasement of the mother's spirit. The

period is long, the society abusive and mean. Children boo, the elderly scold the victim, referring to pregnancy pain and child rearing that the victim forgot about when verbally assaulting the mother. Only a handful of the small grain and no more is allowed if someone is generous until about 50 kgs are collected. Appeasing the spirit involves brewing of beer for the village and mother's relatives to drink, at which time forgiveness is requested from agnatic relatives and their spirits. Once this is accepted the punishment ends and normalcy is restored.

Western influenced feminists who regard African traditions and marriage customs to be anathema to human rights and gender equity have not considered this relationship of mother with her children and the husband's relatives. They argue that tradition is the source of gender violence but their argument lacks detailed critical analysis of those traditions. In fact more powerful protection against a married woman is given through spiritual sanctions, and protection more feared and internalised than society's.

8.3.3. The Spirit World and the Impact on Conflict and Peace

We discern the potential this philosophy has in conflict resolution and peace building from this organic relationship between the spirit world and society. It is therefore critical to realise that the cosmology of a people creates a conditioning and reflex effect on members of society and collectively, on a community. An internalised control of the individual is established with powerful and effective mechanisms to direct human behaviour that no legal instruments or state power can nurture. A mixture of fear, respect and good sense, conditions and internalises individual behaviour and policing, subjecting the individual to perpetual self-criticism and effort to meet *unhu* philosophic standards.

8.4. Nature

Here nature is given a higher status over humans akin to the position of the spirit world. Nature has a close association with the spirit world. The human being is perceived as a minute aspect of the vast expanse of nature which is considered infinite, possessing superhuman and incomprehensible powers. The complexity and vastness of nature, when juxtaposed with the pinpoint dot of human knowledge, result in the domination of ignorance. African philosophy in Zimbabwe acknowledges ignorance as an important part of the knowledge system. If matter is infinite, can knowledge be infinite? The Shona would query a philosophy which believes in the possibility of absolute knowability of matter - the universe.

In the knowledge system methods are devised to restrain human action on nature, wary of consequences of ignorance. Taboos are one such method of controlling individual behaviour (Sadomba 1996; Sadomba and Wakandigara 2015). Their approach is generally of invoking fear resulting in the individual creating a perpetual conditioning effect – internal discipline. Nature, according to African philosophical thought, is too vast and complex to conquer or subdue as it harbours too many secrets. It is neither dead nor unintelligent despite the form of lifelessness it sometime assumes. In contradistinction to Marxist dialectical philosophy, there is indeed intelligence in inorganic matter, in the galaxies and cosmic dusts. The essence of the world is not just matter moving in space and time but a combination of two worlds of existence of the material and spiritual world. Time and space therefore also exist in two modes according to this belief system.

Nature is also a medium of the spirit world just as humans are. The caves in the Matopo Hills of Zimbabwe, for example, were well known to be places where people could verbally communicate with *Mwari* (God), hence Ranger's title *Voices from the Rocks*. In fact flora

and fauna, the soil, air and water, are understood to be full of life and they are believed to communicate with both the spirits and humans. This is in direct contrast to Marxian dialectical materialist philosophy, for example, which denies the existence of consciousness outside the human mind, arguing that thought, cognition or the mind are only products of the human brain.

African life in Zimbabwe is, even today, littered with this form of communication between nature and human society (Lan 1985; Sadomba 1996, Sadomba and Wakandigara 2015). During the war of liberation the guerrillas were instructed to follow and interpret animal behaviour as commands of ancestral spirits (Lan 1985). Moreover, it is from the natural world that the animal symbolism of *mutupo* is derived. It is this world outlook and philosophy of life that is in stark contradiction with Western scientific approach that treats nature as a mindless object for the service of humankind (Ani 1994). Contrary to the African worldview, European philosophy introduces an epistemology that exchanges symbols for objects as argued by Marimba Ani (1994, p. 30):

The creation of the object requires a transformation of the universe, no longer experienced but rather, 'objectified'. This transformation is achieved through a change in the relationship of the knower and the known ... a psycho-intellectual manoeuvre by which the subject is able to separate her/himself from the known. This separation is the key that opens the way to 'knowledge' as conceived by the European and the key that locks the door to the possibilities of the apprehension of a spiritual universe.

African cosmology and agro-ecological philosophy transcends the dichotomous division and reductionist notion of subject and object. The human is not considered the superior subject and the

universe a mere object. Nature, society and spirits exist in symbiosis.

8.5. Human Society

In the African belief system God (*Mwari*) is also called *Musikavanhu* to emphasise the critical connection between mortals and the spirit world. The seniority of the spirit world is once and for all established by this reference to creator and the product. The increase in population eventually caused the formation of the different clans and ethnic groups through segmentation or fragmentation (Hodza 1979; Chigwedere 1985; Kopytoff, 1987). In the belief system of the Shona, the totem becomes the symbol of identity of the newly formed family that will eventually become a clan and later a dynasty. What remains significant among Shona traditions is that the succeeding generations keep, through oral traditions, the names of their ancestors. Names of departed key characters are important in connecting the living descendants to 'the living dead' (Mbiti 1969). The structure of each clan is kept and it is passed on from generation to generation through oral techniques such as praise poems and narrative traditions. These progenitors reside in the *nyikadzimu* i.e. the world of ancestral spirits. Ancestral spirits communicate with their descendants by possessing the *svikiro* spirit medium without any sex discrimination (Mudenge 1988).⁵

The role of the spirit medium is to pass messages from the spirit world to the mortal humans and vice versa. Amongst others, these messages are particularly of agro-ecological management, social harmony and political stability. They include reserving certain species of flora and fauna, total prohibition of human activity on defined areas known as *marambatemwa* (ecological reserves) or declaring certain points sacred shrines, such as pools and caves

(Hodza 1979). The *svikiro* also performs the important social function of anointing the incumbent of royal office. The incumbent (headwoman, headman, chief or king) receives guidance of governance from the spirit world through the *svikiro*. This is how the mortal is connected to the spiritual world. The ruler administers the territory on behalf of and according to the instruction of the spirits of the land (Chigwedere 1985; Sadomba 2010).

This agro-ecological philosophy was pivotal to the concept of land ownership and the property in land. It was the foundation of African land tenure values and customs. No mortal being could own land for example, as this was the preserve of *Mwari* and the ‘living dead’ – the *de facto* autochthons of a specified territory – custodianship being perpetual. Custodianship and possession passed through the sacred process of *kupinga nyika* whereby the founders of clan and kingdom request administrative rights of the territory through their living dead to *Mwari* God. Henceforth the territory is tied perpetually to a specific spiritual genealogy with a particular social identity. The mortal ruler is just but a cog in a great spiritual wheel and a grand spiritual plan. The crowning of a chief by the Rozvi (Hodza 1979, p. 9) is clear on this:

Finally I say, here is a handful of soil, hold it in both hands.
That shows you will rule the land and eat its fruit.
Go pasture and guard every creature, big and small, in the
land in which you are.

Again, here can be seen the basis of the relationship between nature and human society, with the anointed chief being given the responsibility to care for nature and human subjects. Note the authoritative tone and calculated diction in the discourse of the quotation. Humans can only utilise nature under the guidance of the ruler and can only ‘possess’ but not ‘own’ it, in legal terms. Society

can only have usufruct rights and that ends there. Due care was taken not to give a blank cheque to the ruler over nature and human subjects. The ruler was delegated authority and responsibility to govern but also obliged to provide care to both. The symbiosis is apparent from the fact that the ruler is reminded of ‘the land in which you are’, and *not* which you subdue (Genesis 1, p. 28).

Conflicts over land and its resources have always occurred here and everywhere else. However, if there is belief in some supernatural power and divine ownership retaining all authority over land use and management, the conflict is mitigated. The structures of land management in the post conflict phase and during peace building cannot evade the victims simply because they are the descendants of the real custodians – the people who originally engaged in the *kupinga nyika* ritual. As misunderstandings degenerate into conflict, aggressors are mindful to keep conflict within limits. This was not the case with colonial conquest where land management was in the hands of foreign conquerors who did not subscribe to this philosophy.

At the point of land reclamations from white settlers by indigenous black Zimbabweans, led by war veterans from 1997, this philosophy was engaged. Spirit mediums of dynastic territories convened ritual ceremonies for the spirits of the land to provide spiritual leadership and guidance. Rules of operations were set including abstinence from sex in the areas occupied, refraining from killing anyone despite resistance and observance of prohibition rules or taboos associated with specific geographical areas. These ceremonies were done at spiritual locations, usually mountain caves or spacious granitic formations. They were presided over by spirit mediums and traditional chiefs (participant observation Chiweshe 2000–2001, interview MA, 2001). As a result of this not a single white farmer was killed although there were reports of cases of common assault in the area. The conflict was kept within limits,

avoiding bloodshed, which is uncommon. If the Palestinian/Israeli conflict is compared to the land conflicts of Zimbabwe, then the peaceful effect of this philosophy can be appreciated.

Land and its resources are not mere objects of labour or factors of production according to this African cosmology. Authority over land is not final and its administration is always a negotiated process amongst the spirits, the rulers and the public for each one has a duty and obligation. The spiritual position is so cardinal to this belief that ancestral spirits of the land even hide or reveal the secrets of its resources depending on the situation.

8.6. A Synthesis

The dissection of the philosophical components of African agro-ecological religion above is a simplification of a complex reality only meant to give a glimpse of the cosmology. I now attempt to synthesise it and illustrate its symbiotic function.

Wronging either nature or the spirit world invokes punishment demanding appeasement to be forgiven. The spirit world also rewards the individual people with respect and gives them recognition. Likewise the rewards are mostly but not always through nature. Good rainfall, bumper harvests, good health and plenty minerals are signs of spiritual appreciation. It is from these three pillars of the African worldview upon which their way of perceiving the world is based.

Terence Ranger (1999, p. 25) aptly summarises this relationship as follows, comparing it with the European worldview:

By contrast with white assumptions that humanity needed to dominate nature or be dominated by it, Mwali⁶ ideology fused nature and society ... The Matopos represents an original nature, but it is a nature which exists inseparably from human culture. Men and women

are not just living *in* nature; nor are they operating *on* it. Nature and culture are in symbiosis in this African landscape.

It is also important to note that religion, values, beliefs, customs, taboos, language, rituals etc. are societal inventions that aim at projecting and articulating this philosophy or world outlook in as much as they are fashioned by it. Hence human or social practice is guided or directed by this mental image that forms the philosophy of the African. This philosophy or world outlook could contribute immensely to conflict resolution and peace building.

8.7. Contribution of Philosophy to Conflict Resolution and Peace Building

The main challenge that philosophy faces is, indeed, how to apply it to solve real problems of society. Karl Marx correctly points out that philosophers have interpreted the world in various ways but the point, however, is to change it. Sequeberhan (1994, pp. 4–5) argues the point even more regarding specifically African philosophy, saying:

... presently ... African philosophy [has] a rather equivocal orientation ... focus[ing] either on documenting the world-views (i.e. 'lived' but non-articulated philosophies) of ethnic Africans or on philosophically engaging African problems and concerns ... Is it to be an ethnographic and antiquarian documentation of ethnic African world-views, or a systematic philosophic exploration of the problems and concerns deriving from the history and concrete actuality of present-day Africa [that should matter]?

This is a fundamental question. Without articulation of African philosophic thought to solve current problems of the continent

then African philosophic engagement is sterile. Its place would be a museum of antiquity, by the side of the stone axe and the bone arrow. This paper intends to illustrate that this is not the position of African philosophy whatsoever. Rather I articulate this philosophy in order to show how current generations can and indeed, are using this to solve practical problems of life, how the philosophy has potential to resolve conflict and build peace. The following section gives these examples.

8.7.1. National Experiences that Practised this Philosophy

It has been argued that advocates of traditional African philosophy and cosmology tend to romanticise it. With domineering Western culture, indigenous philosophy has more or less been eradicated, some argue. Others argue that the philosophy is still so much alive, otherwise Africa, having gone through slavery and colonisation, should have failed to survive through the ordeals. We therefore question whether there is any evidence of this cosmology being useful in today's life or it is romantic to advocate for it now.

8.7.2. Zimbabwe's Liberation War and Spirit Mediums

The liberation war of the 1970s is one typical example that anchored on this philosophy successfully. David Lan (1985) devoted a whole volume to describe how this cosmology was used to galvanise rural communities, to inspire spiritual leadership and to provide confidence to guerrilla fighters during the struggle (see also Chung 2006). As a rule, guerrillas would never start military operations before educating the African peasants, farm workers and the urban workers about the causes of the war and its intended outcomes. They would emphasise the need to unite in the struggle.

To get audience, guerrilla fighters approached the territorial spirit mediums first and presented their case. The spirit medium

would get possessed and give guerrillas the boundary of the territory and clarify the sacred places where blood could not be spilt, and which guerrillas could use as sanctuary. They would also be informed of the need to pay particular attention to flora and fauna, observing actions of reptiles, primates and birds. These were considered mediums which guided guerrilla fighters out of danger or escape routes under pressures of the battle.

I experienced this spiritual guidance at Dengu Village near Bindura when we got into an ambush. I suddenly became so weak that I could hardly walk as we were getting into a killing bag of Rhodesian Security Forces ambush. Although it was difficult for me to believe this at the time because of my Marxist philosophical background, with what I now know, I believe this phenomenon was a spiritual experience. Late Gonese, former Zimbabwe Liberation War Veterans Association leader in Masvingo, narrated of how fish eagles were fighting choppers, spreading their wings on the windcreens as a battle raged in Bikita. Such narratives are widespread. However, it is not in their accuracy that social science is concerned about but it is in the belief of these things and their impact on social practice that we are interested in. There is no doubt that people who were engaged in the liberation war of Zimbabwe largely subscribed to this philosophy and they articulated it in the struggle for independence.

The philosophy was so strong and functional that the Smith regime commissioned an anthropological research, recording all individuals claiming to be spirit mediums. In the National Archives of Zimbabwe the information is classified under spirit index files using this information for counter-insurgency purposes. At times both the guerrillas and the Rhodesian Security Forces would compete for the services of the spirit mediums. Interviewing comrade Z in 2000, who is currently working at the Parliament Buildings, she told me that guerrillas had to quickly abduct the

medium of the national spirit Nehanda to Zambia against the medium's will. At her age in such a foreign environment, there is no doubt how uncomfortable she was at Chifombo, which condition Z confirmed. Guerrillas took her away in fear of probable use/abuse by Rhodesian Forces, as Z analysed. If this philosophy was not that important, there would not have been such competition and struggle to control spirit mediums.

Ken Flower (1987, pp. 115–16), the Central Intelligence Organisation chief, had this to say about the African religion and how it changed the landscape of the war:

ZANLA had moved ahead of us in the spirit world by invoking the national spirit of 'Chaminuka' (the greatest Shona prophet at the time of the First Chimurenga [anti-colonial war] in the 1890s) and by taking the spirit medium of Nehanda ... [Rhodesian Forces] called [it] 'mumbo jumbo witchcraft' ... [failing] to appreciate the significance of the simple fact that the war had now taken us into the heart of the former Munhumutapa empire, the spiritual home of the Shona peoples and their allies across the border in Mozambique.

The importance attached to the spirit world by the intelligence organisation shows how critical this philosophy is even in the contemporary world. Ken Flower actually argues that at this point the Rhodesians were bound to be defeated because they had lost the battle of the spirit world calling it 'mumbo jumbo witchcraft'.

8.7.3. Political Violence and Spiritual Punishment

Although political violence, especially during elections in Zimbabwe, was a common feature, its level from 2000 was unprecedented when the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) took centre stage as the main opposition party. The MDC started a workers' movement but ended up drawing in white

Rhodesian farmers and industrialists. They were accused of using, as their military support base, former Rhodesian Security Forces and Selous Scouts, the latter who specialised in counter-insurgency warfare using unorthodox means. The opposition also made counter accusations citing use of the army, the Chief Information Officer (CIO) and other state functionaries to advance ZANU-PF political interests. There was widespread violence including murder, arson, assault, etc. as society polarised along the political fault line.

The situation deteriorated with each passing election, now with the intervention of international capital sabotaging the economy and interfering with monetary strategies to cripple the economy in support of the opposition. In addition there were threats of military intervention from Western powers, preparing an attack on Zimbabwe from Botswana and other neighbouring states. Violence escalated to its peak in the 2008 harmonised elections and during the Presidential re-run.

What remains significant as the aftermath of all this is the reaction of the spirit world to the acts of violence at this national scale. First it is believed that the droughts suffered in the past few years during the escalation of violence was spiritual punishment. In fact even individuals who were involved in political murders are believed to have suffered the *ngozi* spiritual punishment. Many are known to be mentally deranged and their families are experiencing the wrath of avenging *ngozi* spirits.

Owing to this the nation, this time around had to go through deep spiritual engagement invoking the spirits of the land and God to have mercy and guide the nation out of this predicament. Both Christian and traditional religious leaders held different ceremonies and prayers requesting for divine intervention. Political violence was blamed first by spirit mediums and war veterans in the 2008 elections (Sadomba 2011, p. 225). This had a great impact on society leaving top political party leaders with no option but to

follow an anti-violence campaign. The peaceful elections of 2013 are largely as a result of the articulation of this philosophy of life that sanctions violence.

8.7.4. Prohibition of Bloodshed during the Land Revolution

When war veterans started to lead land occupations they first consulted spirit mediums for guidance. There were a number of operational rules set by the spirit mediums. However, the most important rule was that no blood would be spilt during the land occupation campaign (Participant observation, Chiweshe 2000–2001). The mediums said that the spirits of the land would handle the removal of white farmers themselves and this would be done peacefully. I attended some of the *bira* ceremonies at Gomba Lowdale Farm a few kilometres from Harare and at Nyota Mountains in Chiweshe where these rules were set. War veterans took this seriously such that in the area of Mazowe, Nyabira and Matepatepa there was no violent death caused by land occupations led by war veterans. There were, however, incidents of common assault like slapping some resisting farmers, forcing them to take off their shoes and to sing and dance. Some were as serious as forcing the farmers to leave without most of their belongings or forcing them to remain indoors for days until rescued by the police. The tactics were numerous, and these depended on the level of resistance of the white farmer, but war veterans observed strictly the rules set by the spirits of the land not to spill blood. Zimbabwe's land reclamation was indeed one of the most peaceful, considering the extent, intensity and complexity of the issues at hand despite negative international media reports to the contrary (Sadomba 2011).

8.7.5. *Family and Household Conflict Management*

The extended family, composed of a number of household units, is an important institution in developing conflict management. Being the basic unit of organisation in an African setting, cultivation of sound conflict management principles at this level will more likely spread across society. It seems that at this level the most effective approach is recognition of and respect for the ancestral spirits and their guidance. Marriage itself is not considered just as a social union but one that calls for powerful spiritual intervention to unite the two.

The agnatic spirits participate in the whole process with symbolic goods and artefacts presented during the process. It is from this very point that conjugal relations receive spiritual blessings. Child birth is not a mere biological act according to this belief system but it is spiritually grounded. If, for example, the marriage failed to follow certain spiritual protocol, such as failure to present the spiritual beast to the agnatic family, child birth can be problematic. If for example the bridegroom was a 'wife of the *ngozi* avenging spirit' the marriage will be full of spiritual problems ranging from hallucination, mysterious illnesses and problematic health conditions.

The philosophy would therefore call for moral uprightness emphasising good behaviour and obedience – *unbu* – in order to avoid problems much later in life. In fact in order to clear himself a dying man would 'arrange for the settlement of the outstanding debts, and to confess any outstanding offences against members of the community ...' (Bourdillon 1976, p. 199). The cosmology of indigenous Africans would require an upright person. Respect for the wife begins from the spiritual demand to present a beast on hoof for the agnatic ancestors (*mombe yebumai*) so that they participate in ordering the new family. This positions the married woman in a high spiritual standing and commensurate social status.

Children of the extended family or the clan are obliged to pay the highest respect to all the mothers of the family or clan. Failure to do so will attract *kutanda botso* (punishment).

As the *ngozi* (avenging spirit) is indiscriminate when it comes to punishment, this forces the extended family to exercise collective responsibility when it comes to controlling individual members of the clan or family. Family elders sternly warn violent members of the family, pointing out that this would cause havoc to all and sundry if a family member is a murderer. If there is no change in behaviour, the extended family will inflict such social punishment as isolating the individual. This is an effective method of punishment because the individual cannot perform certain social functions without the support and participation of other family members. When death occurs in the family of the violent person, close relatives will not attend the funeral and the death will fail to meet the standards required for the spirit of the dead to rest. It will haunt the mortals until appeased. It is therefore a long chain of causal events that the individual family member fears and will try to avoid at least to lead a normal life.

8.7.6. *The Ngozi Spirit and Community Life*

An avenging spirit of *ngozi* makes everyone who believes in this cosmology shudder at the thought of it. The mysterious manner in which people die, and the frequency, is frightening. The prerogative of the spirit world to sanction this as spiritual crime elevates murder or even manslaughter. People know that courts of law presided over by mortal beings of society reflect human weaknesses but not the spiritual ones. A person can escape murder in a mortal court of law or might not even be caught by the long hand of that law by concealing the murder or evidence. The person, however, cannot do so in relation to the spiritual powers of his ancestors, the victims' ancestors and to God. The avenging spirit of the *ngozi* will

make visitations and seek spiritual restitution. Therefore at any cost an individual, the family and the community will not entertain any killing of any person whatsoever. Collective punishment of murder is itself an effective mechanism of controlling this crime. This leads society to cooperate with law enforcement whenever murder occurs, because one also fears what punishment one suffers if one conceals facts that would lead to the arrest and conviction of a murderer.

8.7.7. Resting Spirits in the Post-conflict Phase

Currently in Zimbabwe there is widespread ‘reincarnation’ of dead guerrilla fighters of the liberation Struggle of the 1970s. These are victims of the war whose remains still continue to be scattered unburied or interred in shallow graves. The spirits possess different people including relatives of the deceased fighter or Spirit Mediums with no blood relationship narrating the story of death and leading the audience to the scene where remains lie.

This has happened at such a scale that a national association for the reburial of ex-combatants led to the discovery of mass and single graves where war victims were buried. This attracted the attention of nationalist politicians who had not been interested in the reburial of deceased fighters. The association’s leader was co-opted into the highest organ of the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) party, the politburo, as a political tactic to keep the activities of the politically marginalised former fighters under state control.

According to this philosophy, the dead heroes (*magamba*) are not gone forever but they are in the spirit world, now assuming a different form of existence with greater power over human society. As they died performing a national duty to liberate the country from colonial rule, their political function continues in their current spiritual state. As such, according to this belief system, they

complain and fight against neo-colonialism, recolonisation, self-aggrandisement, corruption and other ills that are antithetical to liberation and empowerment of the poor. They continue to fight for an egalitarian society that they died for. This is the cornerstone of peace in the land. This is not unique to spirits of freedom fighters however. The *midzimu* of a family also tries to remove inequalities in the family members (Gelfand 1973, p. 124). Wiredu (1996, p. 57) summarises the philosophy of life according to Akan belief systems that also sound very similar to Zimbabwean:

To the traditional Akan what gives meaning to life is usefulness to self, family, community, and the species ... More importantly, that afterlife is not pictured as a life of eternal fun for the immortals but rather as one of eternal vigilance – vigilance over the affairs of the living with the sole purpose of promoting their well-being within the general constraints of the Akan ethics ... ancestors ... are generally believed never to relent in this objective, which is one reason why they are held in such high esteem.

Although this philosophy of life is being eroded by Western culture, it still effectively operates in current society. *Unhu* (humaneness), the virtue of life, is still held highly and is rewarded by society, whereas lack of it is despised and the person suffers social punishment. This philosophy of life remains the main driving force and the basis for judgement of humane qualities in Zimbabwe today. As spirits are above human frailty, they do not discriminate. They want prosperity of the nation and seek to protect it from foreign aggressors.

Owing to this belief there is always reference, in the politics of the country, to the position and opinion of the spirits of dead heroes on matters of national concern. This is so strong that political parties try to usurp this cultural resource at any cost. It is

also so important that those who fail to clearly associate with the dead liberation fighters and their cause suffer dismal political defeat. ZANU-PF, because of its monopoly of this cultural resource managed to beat its opponents by a very wide margin in the recent polls despite complaints of election irregularities. Its campaign was fuelled by the memory of departed heroes and heroines and their repugnance to re-colonisation that was blamed on the rival Movement for Democratic Change (MDC).

We see from this how post conflict phase is controlled by powers outside mortal human society. Failure to compensate participants of conflict in the peace-building phase of the nation is a dangerous omission with the potential of causing social and political insecurity. In Zimbabwe this was experienced in the decade 1987 to 1997 when war veterans had to force the state, ZANU-PF and President Mugabe to honour their demands for compensation and return to the liberation agenda. Their main weapon against state power was their connection with the spirits of the dead fighters. This could not be challenged and it had the potential of stirring mass revolt against the state had the latter tried to use violence against the former, which it contemplated at one time (Sadomba 2008, interview Cosmas Gonesse, 2005). A truce had to be agreed between war veterans and President Mugabe, leading to financial awards and forcing the state to support the land revolution that has been the most dramatic since the Second World War.

8.8. Conclusion

The philosophy of a people provides a fundamental theoretical base of dealing with practical problems of life. It is the people's own world outlook, perception of the universe that fashions values, customs, morality, the law and other facets of culture. Conflict resolution and peace building are processes that can hardly succeed

unless they are based on the fundamental ideas that shape thought in a given society. Philosophy plays this role.

The cosmology of Zimbabweans is based on a tripartite worldview composed of the spirit world, nature and human society. These are in symbiosis with human society being the most junior and vulnerable. This belief causes society and the individual members to be very cautious in dealing with nature and the spirit world. Angering the spirits or harming nature can be dangerous and society takes collective responsibility to maintain harmony with the two. It therefore creates mechanisms that inhibit deviant behaviour through internalisation of moral codes of conduct. This internalisation is achieved by a mixture of fear, knowledge and, above all, accommodating ignorance as part of the knowledge system. This is an effective mechanism in handling and resolving conflict.

There is significant potential in engaging this cosmology in conflict resolution and peace building in Africa. It is my proposal that this worldview needs to be articulated in conflict management and peace-building projects. Furthermore, it has to be transmitted to society through the education system. If it spreads and affects people's behaviour as some major events in Zimbabwe have shown, there is little doubt that its potential is far-reaching.

Notes

¹ Gelfand does not classify a *muroyi* (witch spirit) as a *shave* yet, I argue, it should be considered as such. According to this African belief system, a person acquires the skills of *uroyi* (witchcraft) in two major ways. First, it is through the genealogy where a parent, usually grandmother, possessed the spiritual skill and this is known as 'witchcraft within the clan' (*uroyi hwedzinza*). Second, it is through the professional skills of a foreign spirit (*shave*). This foreign spirit may occupy the body of the victim and cause

illness until a diviner (*n'anga*) discovers it. Another way is that one can buy *uroyi* (witchcraft spirit) from the *n'anga* voluntarily. This is known as *kuromba*, a process of acquiring a spiritual skill (*shave*) from the market.

² See also W.Z. Sadomba, *Beyond the Iron Curtains of Care: Factors Affecting Caregiver Compliance to Medical Advice and Instructions*, forthcoming UNICEF Monograph. More revelation is found in the Shona philosophy of health.

³ According to Gelfand (1973, p. 122) there are two types: One is a spirit of a murdered person and another is a spirit of an unpaid employee seeking restitution.

⁴ *The son who once hurt his mother during her lifetime may be punished years later ... he is obliged to do a special kind of penitence (botso) ... The inevitable consequence of the cult of the spirit elders of the family is unity* (Gelfand 1973, p. 115).

⁵ Mudenge (1988) writes about Nyamhita, the sister of Mutota, the progenitor of Mutapa nation. Nyamhita was the sister to Mutota and she became the female founder of the Mutapa descendants by committing incest with her brother, Mutapa Mutota. Nyamhita became the ruler of Handa and therefore acquired the prefix *ne* – according to Shona linguistic construction – connoting that she was ‘administrator of’ Handa. The spirit of Nyamhita is to this day known as Nehanda.

⁶ Mwali is a variation of the word Mwari (God). Mwali spoke to the people through the rocks in Matopo hills. Ranger’s (1999) book, *Voices from the Rocks: Nature, Culture & History in the Matopos Hills of Zimbabwe* gets its title from this.

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Guided by Weak Conviction: Tentative Order and Morality among Urban Dwellers in the Unconventional Economy of 2008 Zimbabwe¹

Mayu Hayakawa

9.1. Introduction

In 2008, I came across a billboard in a high-density² suburb of Harare, the capital city of Zimbabwe. It was an advertisement for Stanbic Bank, containing the following quotation from Kwame Nkrumah, the iconic Pan-Africanist leader, who later became the first prime minister and president of Ghana: ‘We face neither east nor west, we face forward’. I wondered how to interpret these words in the context of present-day Zimbabwe. I was struck by the freshness and power that they had retained through the 40 years since their first utterance. To put this into perspective, Nkrumah’s Ghana attained independence during the Cold War, when the world was divided into the West and the East, and my encounter with the billboard occurred at a time of serious political turmoil and economic decline in Zimbabwe. The government was prompted, in the face of deteriorating relations with Western nations, to seek alternative relations with non-Western countries such as China. However, what came to my mind was not this macro-level story but the very simple question: ‘Which way is forward?’

Zimbabwe entered a period of serious political and economic turbulence in the late 1990s, known as the years of ‘crisis’ (see Chapters 2, 3 and 8 of this volume). Thereafter, as political tensions

mounted, Zimbabwean standards of living, especially those of urban citizens, deteriorated year after year. In 2008, as the severity of the crisis intensified, the country suffered from astronomical hyperinflation, which eventually reached a rate of over two hundred million per cent annually. As would be expected, there were concrete concomitant problems, such as a scarcity of basic commodities, shortages of foreign currency and domestic cash, reduced provision of social services, a population exodus, a cholera pandemic and political violence. More and more of the population were directly affected on an everyday level, with rapid economic and social changes creating great uncertainty. It was as if all conventional rules had evaporated, and no one was able to tell which way was ‘forward’.

Dr Gideon Gono, the then governor of the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ), was one of those tasked with finding the way ‘forward’, setting the economic policy for the nation. In a magazine interview from the middle of 2007,³ he spoke of economic policy in the following way:

We don’t need foreign exchange to build roads and dams. We need local currency. So we print the money here to finance infrastructural development.

We are guided *by conviction and not convention*, and where convention meets conviction, well and good. What drives us is the belief that what we are doing is the correct thing. Those who wrote the economic texts of yesteryear – the Keynes and others – were not living in an environment where the IMF and the World Bank existed. [emphasis added]

It is not my purpose here to examine the validity of his policy. Suffice it to say that eventually, on 30 January 2009, one and half years after this interview, the Zimbabwean government introduced a ‘multi-currency’ system, legalising commerce in several foreign

currencies, including the US dollar, the South African Rand and the Pula of Botswana.

I do not propose to treat of the economic policy itself, but I would like to examine here how Gono described the economic situation. He explained that it was necessary to be inspired by ‘conviction’ rather than ‘convention’, since, to tackle an ‘unconventional economy’, conventional wisdom may not be effective (Gono 2008, pp. 53–7). This is the key to how he was steering the economy of Zimbabwe at that time and how he defined ‘forward’. Of course, this statement sounds fallacious on the basis of common sense. Yet, strange to say, it seems to me that he somehow got the point. Considering what was actually happening in Zimbabwe at that time, the economy was undoubtedly ‘unconventional’ and perhaps best guided by ‘conviction’ or, at least, something other than convention. However, the ‘unconventional’ economy was a problem not only for experts; for ordinary people, too, it created a number of difficulties. Here I propose to look more closely at how ordinary people who were actually living, face-to-face, with these challenges navigated their own economic lives at that time. If the then governor of the RBZ described his policy as guided by conviction in a response to an unconventional economy, then how did those making their way in this economy view it and talk about it?

This chapter aims to approach economic life in Zimbabwe in 2008 from a local point of view. It focuses especially on urban dwellers in Harare, including middle-class civil servants.⁴ Although many consider that the middle class were less damaged than the poor during the hardship, in fact, they suffered greatly from the unconventional economy because, as I will later explain in detail, their economic lives had been reliant on the formal economy, which was heavily disrupted by hyperinflation and cash shortages. Examining the narratives and practices of such individuals, this

chapter explores what actually mattered in their lives and how they managed to cope with new difficulties.

That said, this chapter does not argue that depicting their economic strategies shows how flexibly and effectively people adapted. Rather, I pay more attention to how difficult it was to embrace such flexible economic strategies and how the people were forced to struggle or even ‘fail’ in purely economic terms in the process of adapting to unconventional circumstances. As the narratives and practices collected will show, these people often hesitated to do something unfamiliar, or they needed to justify themselves in doing it. The point is that the people had only a ‘weak’ conviction in contrast to Gono’s assertion, and they experienced ‘ambivalent’ feelings and ‘awkward’ attitudes while navigating the unconventional economy.

These responses sound negative and unsuitable for an argument exploring African potentials. However, it is just such seemingly negative responses that I would like to focus on here as examples of African potentials for, as I will discuss later, such ‘weak’ and ‘awkward’ responses may play a positive role in maintaining and creating order and morality in the midst of drastic change and a disorderly, unconventional situation. Thus, taking seemingly negative responses as a valuable clue, this chapter aims to elucidate the order in disorder produced among ordinary people as a way to detect examples of African potentials.

9.2. Historical Background

The predicament of modern Zimbabwe, especially the events of the 2000s, has been a controversial subject in academia, the media and the political arena (cf. Jacobs and Mundy eds 2009; see also Moyo and Yeros 2007). Here I will simply give a basic outline of Zimbabwean history since independence.

Zimbabwe attained its independence in 1980 after a war of liberation, called the Second Chimurenga, following the initial resistance, the First Chimurenga, against incursions by white settlers in the 1890s (cf. Ranger 1967). Immediately following independence, society was unequally divided based on race, the rich being largely white and the poor overwhelmingly black. Therefore, for the incoming government of Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU–PF), whose party leader is Robert Mugabe, a nation-building project entailing the reduction of racial disparity became the major challenge. The government adopted an economic policy called ‘Growth with Equity’ (Zimbabwe 1981), which aimed to redistribute wealth from white to black populations, and appeared to constitute a combination of socialistic goals and a capitalist system of economic organisation. The country achieved post-independence growth in the early 1980s, which was especially remarkable in terms of its improvement in social welfare services such as education and health. Yet the growth did not last long, partly due to severe droughts and excess expenditure on social welfare services (Raftopoulos 2004; Mlambo 2008; Muzondidya 2009). Eventually, the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) was introduced under the aegis of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) from 1991 to 1995, seeking to increase economic growth and reduce poverty, based on economic liberalism. However, the programme did not function effectively, sharing the fate of similar programmes in other African countries (cf. Ferguson 2006). Both ‘the economy and the majority of the people were worse off at the end of the programme than they had been before it’ (Mlambo 2008, p. 14). Urban dwellers were seriously affected, as wages and the provision of social welfare services declined (Moyo and Yeros 2005).

Consequently, the government faced great pressure from various social groups. On the one hand, workers launched general strikes and

mass stay-aways in the late 1990s. On the other hand, war veterans of the liberation struggle, who had played a key role in building the power of ZANU–PF, challenged the president, demanding compensation for their contribution to liberation. The government gradually adapted radical approaches to land reform and economic management (Moyo and Yeros 2007).

In November 1997 the government decided to expropriate 1,470 white-owned farms (Moyo and Yeros 2005, p. 187), and to award unbudgeted compensation and monthly pensions to war veterans. In addition, in August 1998, the government sent soldiers into the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to defend the Laurent Kabila regime. These three government decisions generated animosity for, and distrust of, the government by major private economic actors and main donors, leading to the reduction of concessional funding and further economic decline. The fourteenth of November 1997, shortly after the decision to pay the war veterans' pensions, was labelled 'Black Friday', because the Zimbabwean dollar lost 74 per cent of its value against the US dollar in a single day (Mlambo 2008, p. 16). This is thought to have been a trigger for the subsequent onset of high inflation (cf. Bond 2007; Raftopoulos 2009, p. 219), although cuts in concessional loans by international financial institutions also played a critical role (Moyo and Yeros 2007).

In tandem with the stream of economic challenges, land reform had been a crucial issue for the country since independence. Together with the large economic disparities, an uneven pattern of land ownership remained. Most fertile land was possessed mainly by the white minority, while the black majority lived in marginal rural lands with poor soil and unreliable rainfall (Moyo 2000, p. 6). The tardiness of land reform was mainly due to the Lancaster House constitution, formed in 1979 at one of the negotiation conferences that led to peace and independence. The constitution stated that land could not be

confiscated for ten years after independence, but must be bought on a 'willing seller, willing buyer' basis (Muzondidya 2009, p. 165). This 'protected the interests of large-scale white commercial farmers and prevented the government from buying enough land to meet the increasing needs of a growing population' (Muzondidya 2009, p. 172), especially the many land-hungry Africans. In 1992, two years after the expiry of the restriction imposed by the Lancaster House constitution, the government introduced the Land Acquisition Act to speed up the process of land reform through land expropriation, although it was able to make little progress (Moyo 2001; Muzondidya 2009, p. 190). Between 1998 and 1999, reflecting the growing dissatisfaction with the government's land policy, peasants and farm workers in various rural communities occupied white commercial farms (Moyo 2001).⁵ Yet the government did not demonstrate an attitude of outright support for the land occupations (Marongwe 2003, pp. 163–5). Moreover, lack of finances was also a critical problem for land reform. The governments of the UK and the US refused to fund the land reform programme, as requested by the Zimbabwean government at the International Donor Conference in 1998 (Raftopoulos 2009, p. 212).

From the late 1990s onwards, political conflict within the country increasingly deepened, while its international relations worsened. In February 2000, the Zimbabwean government put constitutional reform to a referendum, but the draft was rejected and the government lost. A mass campaign against constitutional reform was launched by a new political party, called the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), led by Morgan Tsvangirai. This party was founded in 1999 by various members of civic groups such as trade unions, church groups, student unions, white farmers and so forth; it received substantial funding from Western donors. Soon after the referendum, veterans' groups, who had expected that a clause in the rejected constitution 'would allow the compulsory acquisition of farms by government

without payment of compensation for the land itself' (Marongwe 2003, p.178), started occupying the land of white commercial farms in various areas. Some landless people and other groups also participated in this movement. The government supported these land occupation movements, sometimes even with the use of violence (Raftopoulos 2009, p. 212).

After 2000, the MDC grew, becoming the leading party opposing ZANU–PF. In the June 2000 parliamentary elections, the MDC won 57 seats to ZANU–PF's 62, while in the 2002 presidential election Mugabe received 56 per cent of the vote to Tsvangirai's 42 per cent. In July 2000, just after the presidential election, the government initiated a programme of radical land reform (Fast Track Land Reform Programme), under which the government appropriated the land of white farmers without giving any compensation (Moyo 2001). Radical land reform and various conflicts over a series of elections prompted severe criticism from Western countries, who saw in this action an opposition to democratic processes. The UK, US, European Union (EU) and Australia imposed economic sanctions on Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwean government criticised these sanctions as illegal, redefining the 'crisis' as the 'Third Chimurenga', implying by the use of this word that this was a fight for liberation from a neo-colonial world order based on the hegemony of the West. While the economic policy of the government became radicalised, the Zimbabwean economy suffered. The severity of the situation reached its worst point in 2008.

9.3. The Unconventional Economy in 2008

The details of the 'unconventional economy' in 2008 will be illustrated through the narratives cited in Section 9.5. Here I give only an outline, explaining how the conventional economy emerged in 2008 and how it changed the conventional economic structure, due to the

virtual collapse of the formal economy and the dominance of an informal economy, or black market, mainly resulting from astronomical hyperinflation and cash shortages.

In March 2007, Zimbabwe went into hyperinflation, defined as inflation in excess of 50 per cent per month (Cagan 1956),⁶ which virtually ended in January 2009.⁷ In July 2008, the monthly rate reached 2,600 per cent, while the annual rate reached 231 million per cent, which implies that prices were doubling every seven days (cf. Hanke and Krus 2012). This was the last official inflation rate calculated in terms of Zimbabwean dollars because, from that time, it became impossible for the Central Statistics Office (CSO) to determine inflation rates.⁸ Even after this, however, inflation continued at an accelerating pace. In late December 2008, the price of bread was seen to double in the time it took to reach the head of the queue. Prices increased on three occasions in a single day in a retail shop, and I heard that bus fares could rise even before a destination was reached.

Along with hyperinflation, people suffered from cash shortages⁹ that were more extreme than anything that had occurred previously. Limits on daily cash withdrawals per person were set at relatively low amounts.¹⁰ Those whose monthly salaries were directly transferred to their bank accounts, such as civil servants, were unable to withdraw their salaries quickly or access necessary amounts within one day. Some queued at ATM points every day from as early as 3.00 a.m. to be certain to get cash. What is worse, as they stood through this long and tiresome process of accessing their cash, the Zimbabwean dollar was losing its value.

Cash in local currency was still critical for such daily activities as paying for public services or purchasing basic commodities. Although some formal shops, such as major supermarkets, accepted cheques and plastic money using bank cards and the real time gross

settlement (RTGS) system, most basic items were not available in this way, and could be purchased only on the black market. Foreign currency gradually circulated in parallel markets, despite this being illegal (cf. Mawowa and Matongo 2010, p. 330). However, foreign currency had not yet been established as either a formal or informal means of payment. This was because hard cash in foreign currency was in constant short supply, especially small denominations such as US one-dollar bills or coins, which were vital for daily transactions.¹¹

The strict price controls (the ‘price blitz’ or Operation *Dzikisai Mitengo*), initiated by the government on 18 June 2007, became the trigger for almost all basic commodities to be traded on the black market (cf. Jones 2010a). The government forced all shops to reduce prices to those obtaining two weeks previously, which meant that the price of almost everything was halved. At the beginning of price controls, people were able to buy domestically produced basic commodities at reduced prices by waiting in long queues. As time went by, however, most factories reduced production and few commodities were supplied to supermarkets. As a result, if necessities such as maize meal, bread, soap, cooking oil, sugar and salt were desired, they had to be obtained from someone dealing in those items. Gradually, most basic commodities came to be imported from neighbouring countries by individuals talented in business, who then traded them on the black market.

Hyperinflation and cash shortages affected a larger proportion of the population than ever. For example, one farmer in a rural community,¹² who had sold her cotton from the 2007–08 harvest, received a relatively large amount of money by cheque, but by the time she managed to access the cash, it was no longer capable of buying anything meaningful (Zvikomborero and Chigora 2010, p. 12). In urban areas, after the implementation of Operation *Murambatsvina* in 2005 – a government-led operation of demolishing houses in

squatter areas, including the destruction of additions to existing houses without permits – informal economic activities in public spaces became more strictly controlled (cf. Musoni 2010). However, more and more people, especially those dependent on their monthly salaries for their livelihoods, were forced to earn cash through informal activities. For example, the majority of teachers in public schools stopped teaching and, instead, engaged in cross-border trade (since Zimbabwean civil servants were not required to obtain a visa to visit South Africa at that time) or in giving private lessons to students and charging them in foreign currency (Chagonda 2011, chaps 7 and 8).

Thus, the structure of the economy in Zimbabwe changed drastically into something unconventional. The conventional structure and functions that characterise the fundamental part of the nation's economy, such as the formal sector, social and economic classes, and the financial system, had been undermined.

9.4. How to Approach the Unconventional Economy

Although I understand that a very difficult time was actually experienced by many in 2008, I am attempting to consider the situation as ordered in a particular way. To detect 'ordered disorder' and make my standpoint as clear as possible, I will explain some key points of this article, namely: everyday life, the experience of a crisis of meaning and 'weak' conviction.

The idea of 'everyday life' in Zimbabwe in 2008 may sound somewhat contradictory, for daily life in those days took on an aspect of abnormality due to a range of problems. The international press reported the situation as if normal life were on the edge of collapse, showing sensational pictures of piles of local currency banknotes with numerous zeros, empty shelves in supermarkets, sewage water flowing

in front of houses and border jumpers to South Africa. While I do not deny for a moment that such media reports and common images conveyed a degree of fact, such images and reports allow us easily to overlook the simple fact that such abnormality was a part of what made up everyday life. Whereas crisis is conventionally seen as an isolated period that brings temporary disorder to the lives of people, as Vigh showed in his study on chronic conflict and decline in Guinea Bissau, for those who live in a world not characterised by peace, prosperity and order, it is not experienced as a temporary disaster but as a situation in which crisis is an on-going experience (Vigh 2008; see also Shevchenko 2009, chap. 1). By shifting the focus to ‘everyday life’ as crisis (‘crisis as context’) from the ‘crisis’ itself (‘crisis in context’), we may relatively easily approach the ‘ordered disorder’ that emerges under seemingly abnormal conditions (Vigh 2008, p. 12), for even in a situation of disorder, people actively seek new bearings and continue to have the ability to act (Vigh 2008, p. 10).

In Zimbabwe too, total chaos was avoided in a situation of on-going crisis by continual effort at both the material and moral levels. On the one hand, the subjects of the narratives employed various coping and survival strategies; for instance, remittances from diaspora relatives (Mukwedeya 2012), reciprocal exchange with relatives in rural areas, cross-border trade, urban agriculture, moonlighting, small-scale informal trade (Chagonda 2011; Moyo 2010; Zvikomborero and Chigora 2010; Duri 2012; Cephass and Chazovachii 2012; Tawodzera 2012) and money burning¹³ (Gukurume 2015). On the other hand, they made efforts in another realm, more symbolic and qualitative, where such survival strategies were not necessarily able to provide enough resolution. As James Ferguson pointed out in his ethnography of economic decline in the Zambian copper belt (Ferguson 1999), the experience was not only of an economic crisis but also of a crisis of meaning, where ‘the way that people are able to understand their

experience and to imbue it with significance and dignity has (for many) been drastically eroded' (Ferguson 1999, p. 14). In the case of Zimbabwe as well, in a period of drastic change in economic and social structures, the frameworks¹⁴ through which people make sense of their lives were disrupted, forcing them to seek out new bearings.

Some researchers on Zimbabwe have already attempted to approach this qualitative dimension, arguing that the logic of economic lives was forced to change, especially in 2008. In the case of Harare, for example, Shannon Morreira described the experience of the urban poor as that of 'disappearing modernity and polluted urbanity' (Morreira 2010). Tapiwa Chagonda argued that the discipline of the working class changed from 'workerism and partyism' to 'individualism and survivalism' (Chagonda 2011). Jeremy Jones argued for the dominance of the *kukiya-kiya* economy (Jones 2010b), in which people did whatever they could as a matter of necessity. All these views are informative but the most relevant perspective to be touched on here is that of Jones.

Kiya-kiya is a slang term in Shona, one of the major local languages in Zimbabwe, expressing a condition or degree that is barely acceptable or endurable, far from the ideal standard. Similar to 'system D', the second economy (MacGaffey 1991) and the 'Kinshasa bargain' (Bilakila 2004) in Zaire, the *kukiya-kiya* economy was a kind of 'getting-by economy', where people were forced to engage in 'zigzag' activities, regardless of their legality or properness and engage in activities such as smuggling, theft and prostitution to survive. According to Jones, up to 2007, the *kukiya-kiya* economy had been limited to certain times and certain spaces, such as those of poor urban youth, but in 2008 it characterised virtually the entirety of Zimbabwe's economy. Jones's challenge was to show 'how a particular economic logic, once stigmatised as lacking in "direction", has grown into a

dominant form of economic action; one that is not only preferred but also ostensibly “necessary” (Jones 2010b, p. 298).

I share, more or less, this same presupposition and question with Jones, although my argument starts from a position that is almost the opposite of his. I focus on how individuals become engulfed in the dominance of ‘a particular economic logic’, namely *kiya-kiya*, and struggle to come to grips with their situation. This difference in approach derives mainly from the background of our sources. Jones focused on young males living in Chitungwiza, one of the largest high-density suburbs of Harare. The point is that the logic of the *kukiya-kiya* economy that had grown into a dominant force in Zimbabwe in 2008 was originally that of Jones’s sources and, thus, these young men were relatively familiar with a situation that was just emerging for others. They managed the situation effectively and tactfully. Their practices appear artistic. As one of Jones’s friends said, [if someone does not *kiya-kiya*,] he ‘won’t make any money, and that’s the whole point’ (Jones 2010b, p. 297). These narratives have a ring of confidence.

The people I focused on, however, lived in areas of both high and low density, with the main two informants being civil servants at a middle-class level. Some were of the lower classes. More importantly, most of them were honest Christians, who often went to church. They were not familiar with the new economic logic of *kiya-kiya* and tried to manage the new economic situation in a ‘blind’ way. Their practices appeared ‘awkward’ and smacked of naivety. They had ‘weak’ conviction in whatever they did. They were often shocked and immobilised, as it were, by their surroundings, frequently failing to make a quick calculation or stopping to have second thoughts.

As I argue later, such responses along with weak conviction were not rare but were experienced, to a greater or lesser degree, by most urban dwellers under the conditions of hyperinflation.¹⁵ Although few

researchers have given this much attention, these responses may be key to understanding the existing order and morality in an unconventional economic situation.

9.5. Case Study

9.5.1. *The Conventional as Dysfunction*

On 17 August 2008, I met a middle-aged black man, a civil servant working as a librarian at a national university in Harare. When I went to the reception counter at the library, he began to talk, as it seemed, endlessly. He said,¹⁶

A loaf of bread costs one trillion¹⁷ Zimbabwean dollars; it is unaffordable. So what do we do? We do not eat bread but just eat *sadzwa* [a Zimbabwean staple, made from maize meal] for breakfast, lunch and supper. To feed my family of two children, 30 kilograms of maize meal is needed every month. [Ten kilograms of maize meal cost three trillion Zimbabwean dollars.] So, three trillion Zimbabwean dollars times three equal nine trillion Zimbabwean dollars, which is necessary each month ... But even if I found a bag of maize meal at a shop sold for three trillion Zimbabwean dollars, something tricky would happen. I would return to the shop with the same amount of money on the next day, but I would find that the price had already increased to four trillion Zimbabwean dollars. Then, I would go home to collect more money but by the time I got back to the shop, the price would have increased to five trillion Zimbabwean dollars. Here the money system is so dysfunctional that it seems to be much better for us to do barter trade...

You know, in July [the previous month] the daily cash-withdrawal limit from the ATM was ten billion Zimbabwean dollars, but at that time, the bus fare from my home to downtown cost 30 billion Zimbabwean dollars one way, so 60 billion Zimbabwean dollars was needed to return

home: 60 billion to receive ten billion Zimbabwean dollars? What was that? [laughing]

The other day, I went to gather some firewood with my son on the other side of the river, which is ten kilometres away from my home. I was carrying five or six kilograms of firewood on my head. [Usually men do not carry burdens on their heads.] In the middle of the journey, I put my foot on a slippery rock in the river. Then my foot got caught between some rocks and was cut; my blood flowed into the water of the river, turning it red. I got my foot out of the rocks and waded out of the river as the wound continued to bleed. I tried to stop the bleeding by using a plastic bag [as advised by the accompanying friend]. By then I started to feel a sharp pain in my foot and, eventually, my friend found a car to take me home. I arrived home at nine in the evening. After supper I went to bed, but I failed to sleep because of the pain. I tossed and turned for hours. I shouted, 'Does anyone have painkillers?' Then one of my neighbours gave me two tablets of painkiller and finally I could sleep.

The next day, I went to the hospital. I filled in a form for my medical aid. I was told to fill in another one so as to, they said, be paid additional insurance. I finished filling the form and waited for the doctor, who was supposed to come soon. The clock struck nine, ten, eleven, twelve o'clock ... and finally it got to six o'clock in the evening. Then I was told to go home, since the doctor would no longer come. What they had done was to process the insurance claim. That is all. They did not take my temperature. They did not give me medicine, or even water.

Look at this office, three quarters of my colleagues are not coming to work; nobody cares, nobody makes a fuss, they all just keep quiet. At my children's school, some students do not bring any food with them. Teachers charge an extra fee for supplementary lessons, so we need to pay for tuition twice, both to the school and to the teachers for private lessons. As for the police, they stop vehicles on roads to ask drivers how much money they have and force them to pay fines for petty reasons.

Medical doctors and nurses also do the same sort of thing, and what is more, they demand foreign currency! As for the poor, they vend vegetables like cabbages on the street, which they order from the market place and sell for ridiculous prices near their homes.

What kind of situation is this? Of course other countries also have many problems, but the countries facing similar problems to us are usually at war, aren't they? A country in this situation with no war can only be Zimbabwe. In high-density areas, sewage water is running where children are playing. We need clean water to cook, to wash laundry, and to wash our hands. We cannot use filthy water.

We boil water to cook *sadzwa* then when we are about to put maize meal into the pot, the electricity goes. While taking a shower, after putting soap in my hair and about to rinse it off, the water stops running from the tap. Going to the barber's shop to have my hair cut, about half way through, the electricity goes.

What kind of situation is this? After waiting in a long queue at the bank, and on my way home by commuter bus (*kombi*), I am told that the vehicle has run out of petrol [he cannot stop laughing].

The librarian's conversation vividly revealed the confusion of the economy in 2008. He touched on many of the problems in the country, such as hyperinflation, cash shortages, the absence and moonlighting of employees, corruption and failures of water and electricity, from which he was actually suffering. Besides economic hardship, he was at a loss when it came to making sense of his life and experience. He did not have any idea how to tackle such an unfamiliar situation. He repeated, 'What kind of situation is this? What kind of situation is this?' He tried to find 'a name for something that is viscerally "there" but is still undefined' (Hammar 2014, p. 3). Yet without knowing exactly what the situation was, he had to make his life possible one way or another. He did what he could do. He went to gather some firewood,

but then unfortunately he was injured seriously enough that he needed to go to the hospital. But even at the hospital, no one treated him. He was left alone for half a day. Nothing seemed to go right for him.

His conversation showed his inner conflict over the conventional and the unconventional. Let us look closely again at what he said. I wondered if he could not have done anything 'better' to make his living other than gathering firewood. Perhaps he could not, at least from his viewpoint at that time. He said that 'the poor' were selling vegetables on the street. His reference to 'the poor' implied that he did not see himself as 'poor' but probably 'middle class', as he had formal employment, despite the tough conditions that he had already lived through. In addition, he regarded the prices of the vegetables that the street vendors sold as 'ridiculous'. The word 'ridiculous' has the additional negative connotation of 'unfair', not merely expensive. So here too, he seemed to imply that street vendors might be making excessive profits, although he did not himself engage in this nor did he want to. Thus, informal trading, especially small-scale vending on the street, did not seem a possible strategy to make his living, at least at that point, because to him it did not seem to be proper or ethically correct.

I do not mean to say that his class-consciousness matters here. Instead, what should be noticed is the gap between the framework by which he grasped the world and the actual situation surrounding him. He continued to apply a 'conventional' framework to understand the newly emerging situation, which was 'unconventional'. That framework led him to fail to make sense of the on-going situation. Sadly, his practices, based on conventional values, such as going to work and the hospital, did not function effectively any more. Pierre Bourdieu referred to this kind of failure as a 'hysteresis effect' (Bourdieu 1977; Shevchenko 2009; Nakagawa 2012),¹⁸ which, put simply, is a disjuncture between a 'field' and a 'habitus'. The habitus

has a degree of inertia and a tendency to reproduce itself so as to perpetuate the objective structures that produced it. But when the social structure rapidly changes for some reason, ‘some agents may have difficulty generating practices that correspond with the new order’ (McDonough and Polzer 2012, p. 362). Under such conditions, their habitus cannot fulfil its original function in the midst of a new structure. Bourdieu refers to what causes this negative spiral as hysteresis.

The experiences of hysteresis seem to be essential in life under hyperinflation. For example, one person who had experienced hyperinflation in Hungary in the 1920s noted the following:

My relations and friends were too stupid. They didn’t understand what inflation meant. They didn’t rush to get rid of their money (that was what the Jews and the Germans did). All my relations thought it would stop the next week – and they went on thinking so.

They woke up very late. They started selling their valuables because they couldn’t buy food – the china from the mantelpiece, the furniture, the silver. (Fergusson 2010, p. 234)

In hyperinflationary Zimbabwe as well, experiences of hysteresis were common. For example, it was quite difficult for people to tell whether a given price was ridiculous immediately on learning it. Thus, shoppers would often be startled, saying something like, ‘What is this price! It is too expensive!’ After a while, however, through comparisons between vendors, or knowing that the same item was not available elsewhere, shoppers would eventually come to think that the price was fair or normal.

Although it is true that the experiences of hysteresis shared by many were often bitter, should they be seen as merely ‘stupid’ or ‘negative’? Before we judge their practice as a simple ‘failure’ in terms

of economics, we need to look closely at the process from the individuals' perspective. Let us look at another case, examining hysteresis from a different angle.

9.5.2. The Conventional as a Potential Solution

The following recounts an episode that occurred when I was with Corrine. She was my roommate in Zimbabwe, 29 years old at that time, black, Shona-speaking, and a civil servant, working as a physician at a national hospital, although sometimes working at a private hospital as a locum physician.

In June 2008, Corrine and I attended evening service at a church located in Avondale, a low-density suburb in Harare. After church we left for home in Corrine's car. When the car was about to turn off at a large intersection near the church, we found one of our friends who had attended the same service standing in a long queue waiting for a commuter bus at a bus stop. Corinne stopped her car at some distance from the bus stop to pick up the friend who was heading downtown. The friend soon saw us and happily ran to the car. At the same time, however, other strangers who were in the same queue also rushed to our car. One of them asked by way of confirmation, 'Are you going to town? Could you give us a lift?' Although it was not to provide a lift to strangers that Corinne had stopped her car, she answered, 'Yes, get in.' Thus the six of us, including our friend and three strangers who all sat in the back seat, started our drive to downtown. 'How much do you charge?' one of the strangers asked Corinne along the way. I saw him holding an amount of Zimbabwean dollars, which I guess he had in hand, ready to pay for the commuter bus he had been waiting for. Despite his question, Corinne just said 'Umm...' then kept quiet. Meanwhile I started to calculate in my mind how much the payment in total would be for three people. The car finally arrived at the downtown area and stopped by the side of the road. That stranger

tried to pass Corrine the money that he had been holding in his hands all the way. But she said ‘No, I won’t take the money’. All the people she dropped off appreciated her kindness.

Corinne and I headed toward home. Afterwards, I had somewhat mixed feelings. Although I did not have any right to say anything about the incident, I could not help asking Corinne, half disappointedly, ‘Why didn’t you accept the money? You should have taken it. Don’t you know we have no toilet tissue at home? I wanted you to buy some toilet tissue with the money ...’ Corinne looked at me in surprise, ‘Oh, don’t we have any tissue at home? Sorry, but I didn’t think that it was the right thing to take money for doing *such a [small] thing* ...’

At the time of this incident, it was difficult to find toilet tissue at affordable prices. At the same time, petrol was in seriously short supply in Harare. The frequency of public transport was considerably reduced. People were stopping cars at random to ask for a lift. In addition, at that time, there was such a severe shortage of Zimbabwean dollars in cash that it was difficult for ordinary people to access enough. Providing a lift was a simple way to get cash quickly, if a car and access to petrol were available.

In one way, the episode was a small conflict extending no further than my roommate and me, but in another it shows the conflict between the conventional and the unconventional. I insisted that Corrine should have taken the money from the strangers to whom she had given a lift because at least one of them was about to pay the money and we did not have toilet tissue at home. Above all, it seemed ‘natural’ and ‘normal’ to me at that time, because I myself often used the mushrooming ‘impromptu’ transport services¹⁹ and paid them without feeling uncomfortable. However, this was not the case with Corrine. She refused to take any money.

Here again, we can point to the existence of the hysteresis effect. There was a gap between the conventional framework and the actual

economic situation. Her response was understandable, in a sense, because it was true that, especially when driving in rural areas or over long distances, people often gave lifts to strangers without charge. Corrine was acting with others based on her previous experience but, unfortunately, at that time her action was no longer simply ‘such a [small] thing’; it had taken on a different meaning. Her ‘kindness’ was easily mixed up with economic intention by others who were actively taking advantage of, and understanding the offer of a ride as, a business opportunity. She was aware that the stranger was intending to make the transaction a market exchange (or at least something other than a gift exchange), but for her such a transaction was ‘not good’ or unnecessarily business-minded. As a result, the transaction became something ‘awkward’ and unnatural. Also, in terms of economics, she ‘failed’ to take the chance to make a profit. Some would think (as I actually did) that she should have thrown away the conventional framework so as not to miss the opportunity, given that people needed to behave in a ‘zigzag’ way to get by in the conditions of the *kukiya-kiya* economy.

Of course, to see her action as a ‘failure’ is a possible stance; however, I would like to draw attention to something else here. It should not be ignored that Corrine was attempting to make the transaction a moralised, not a monetary act (cf. Ferguson 2006, chap. 6), like the transaction that took place with our friend from church. This was because reciprocal exchange, or the moral economy, continued to play a considerably significant role under the conditions of severe economic constraints. For example, I often found that when the water supply was disrupted in one building (cf. Musemwa 2012), its residents simply went to another person’s home, where water was still available, carrying empty containers. Institutions such as churches would open their deep wells to the public, letting people draw water without charge. In 2008, I heard that some people were starting to sell

water. I myself never witnessed such a transaction, so I cannot say who exactly was selling or buying water. I can report, however, that people appeared shocked, at least those around me, at hearing talk of the ‘water business’. It was not a strategy firmly established to avert a ‘crisis’ but, rather, a casual solution based on daily interactions, part of the continuity with conventional life, which sometimes showed a loose reciprocity among those in social relationships and among strangers.

9.5.3. *New Order, Tentative Morality*²⁰

There remains a question that needs to be examined. As for the informal economic activities emerging in an unconventional situation, such as vegetable vending by the ‘poor’ and transactions of ‘impromptu’ transport services, as mentioned in the previous cases, should they be seen just as ‘exploitation’? In other words, did people have no alternative but one of two extremes in which one was moral but self-sacrificial or economic-minded but immoral or exploitative? It is true that the prices of commodities on the black market were unfavourable, usually double or triple the prices found elsewhere, and this was often a target of criticism among people. However, there was another framework that could be adjusted relatively easily to manage the balance of the two extremes.

Jane Guyer describes a method of ordered distribution of petrol among the Yorba people in western Nigeria (Guyer 2004, chap. 6). Despite the fact that petrol was in short supply during the crisis of the national economy in the 1990s, there were no riots over access to it. This was because, according to Guyer, the popular market functioned well to distribute petrol in the local context. There is a clue to its functioning in the names of three categories, in local terms, for classifying prices, namely ‘base price’ (*ojúlówó*), ‘expensive’ (*wóń*), with the connotation of ‘scarce’, and ‘exploitative’ (*ajeju*), with the implication of ‘unnecessary profit’. During a shortage, people know

that scarce goods are unavailable at the normal base price. Under these conditions, the scale of value judgements can shift from affordability to availability. If the seller appears to be demanding an excessive profit, on the other hand, the buyer will judge the price to be 'exploitive'. Within a local market, a seller has to try to set the price at the level of 'expensive', which is another tentative standard used by people during a shortage, so that his price will not be stigmatised as 'exploitative' by a buyer (Guyer 2004, pp. 104–5).

In the case of Zimbabwe as well, it is beneficial to pay attention to such categories related to judgement, especially the differentiation between 'expensive' and 'exploitative' prices. For example, one day I heard a pastor at church preaching about the 'black market'. He said, 'I came across a friend for the first time in a very long while. I asked him, "What do you do these days?" Then the friend answered, "I quit my job. These days, I do not go to work but sell soap bars on the black market." He should have called his job "supplier of soap" rather than trader on the "black market".'

By saying this, the pastor was trying to assist his friend evade the stigma conventionally put on the phrase 'black market'. By calling the work his friend did that of a 'supplier', he was trying to assimilate it to another standard, one allowing people to change how they interacted with him, from the perspective of legality to that of availability. At another church, a priest advised a young man, who was intending to collect attendance fees for a youth meeting in US dollars before transactions in foreign currencies became officially legalised, that, 'It is OK for you to collect the money in US dollars, but do not make a profit'. This priest was trying to caution the young man against obtaining unnecessary profits, rather than being concerned over the legality of the specific type of currency used.

While these church leaders logically tried to create a framework for reality, to show how things should be (Vigh 2008, p. 11), another way

to approach reality, based on one's own experience, was coming to the fore.²¹ One day when I was talking to my friend, a street vendor dealing in prepaid cards for cellular phones as well as being a general secretary at a small Pentecostal church, he explained his empirical impression of 'prices these days'. He said that, 'These days, there is not what we can call a "price" for items but, instead, there is only "desperate desire" (*shungu*) and "agreement" (*kumwirana*)'. Thus, what determines a final price is the agreement (*kumwirana*) between a buyer and a seller. It is true that there were approximate general figures for prices on this day or that day, but he emphasised that such general figures do not necessarily translate to the actual price, because the actual price is always determined by the particular context the parties are in. If one side is desperate (*ane shungu*), the final price may be different from the general figure: if a buyer is desperate, the final price goes higher, whereas if a seller is desperate it goes lower. This explanation implies that in conditions of hyperinflation, a seller is able to set a price at any amount according to his circumstances but, at the same time, this action makes no sense if he is not able to find a buyer who agrees to such a price.

Based on those explanations, we can derive a fresh perspective on the informal economic activities discussed in the two cases, besides just seeing them negatively as 'illegal', 'exploitative', or 'immoral'. If we look at the informal economy of the lift, for example, I found that drivers charged about the same fares as commuter buses did. I never encountered one charging a higher rate, although I frequently used their services. They provided regular transport services that complemented the formal commuter buses, which could not meet the need. It is true that sometimes a crush could happen among passengers, who jostled and shoved each other to get into a car, without respecting the pre-existing order of the queue before the car's arrival. This was, however, just a minor conflict. Generally, 'wholly

antisocial practices were actually rare and there was no Hobbesian state of war' (Jones 2010b, p. 298).

9.6. Concluding Remarks

This chapter has explored economic life in an urban area of Zimbabwe in 2008. It has shown how people navigated these circumstances, maintaining and creating a form of order in unconventional circumstances, as an example of African potentials. By way of concluding remarks, I will discuss how this occurred and what contributed to the order produced in disorderly economic life.

First, as I have repeatedly noted, people made efforts to create some kind of sense from unconventional situations. As cases in this chapter have shown, there was a broad experience of 'hysteresis' in the unconventional economy in which the conventional framework and the practices based on it became dysfunctional. This hysteresis effect approximates to what Ferguson called a crisis of meaning. Ferguson explains that despite the fact that individuals face a crisis of meaning, 'people are never passive in the face of such changes'. They are 'struggling to make sense of their experience, and to find new ways of conceptualizing the broad social and economic changes that rock their lives' (Ferguson 1999, p. 14). The people in Harare also, as the cases in Section 9.5.3 clearly show, continued to make efforts to fashion new frameworks as a way to grasp the on-going situation.

The second is the way in which the people conceptualised a new and unconventional situation. They did it in their own ways, with consideration for the specific context, which were neither solely based on the market principle of self-interest nor on the rule of law, nor achieved in the process either simple self-sacrifice or exploitation. Under the unconventional economy, social life lacked coherence with regard to traditional principles of legality, economic efficiency and

morality. In such a situation, people always had to judge the propriety of each transaction in their own way. Yet this does not mean that they lived selfishly. Instead, they produced various ways to moralise their economic lives according to the specific local context. They navigated their economic lives in their own way, respecting principles of morality as well as subsistence, in very difficult circumstances.²²

Finally, I note the potential of the hysteresis effect. Although old frameworks seemed to have become dysfunctional in the new situation, they may have played a role in maintaining a certain level of order in the midst of rapid change. Of course hysteresis may be a shackle that induces people to 'fail' to adapt flexibly to new conditions; however, seen from another angle, these apparent 'failures' resulting from hysteresis represent the expectation of people that things should not change but remain as they have hitherto been. As stated in the previous paragraph, if people find themselves in a situation in which they individually measure propriety in their own particular way, hysteresis can be seen as an alternative way to live, with a degree of propriety, in an unconventional situation.

The Zimbabwean 'crisis' created multiple difficulties for urban dwellers, but those who presented their narratives in this chapter continued to seek order and morality, even if it meant a tentative or *kiya-kiya* morality. While it is true that they had only weak conviction in their transactions and practices, which were sometimes actually 'inefficient' or 'inflexible', these same responses may also have had the potential to maintain a sense of everydayness in conditions of drastic socio-economic change, and may have helped to bridge the gap between the conventional and the unconventional.

Notes

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² In the colonial era, residential areas were racially segregated. High-density areas were previously residential areas for blacks while low-density ones were for whites.

³ Interview by B. Ankomah: ‘Zimbabwe economy: The real story’, *New African*, Vol. 465, pp. 76–8. The italics in the quotation are mine.

⁴ On the study of responses among the wealthy, see Morreira (2015).

⁵ This initiative of land occupations is controversial. While Marongwe describes it as being led by the peasants themselves, in contrast to the land occupations in 2000 (Marongwe 2003), Moyo points out the possibility of the involvement of the government, using war veterans (Moyo 2000, p. 11).

⁶ Cagan defines an episode of hyperinflation as ‘beginning in the month the rise in price exceeds 50 per cent and as ending in the month before the monthly rise in prices drops below that amount and stays below for at least a year’ (Cagan 1956 pp. 25–7). Although from August 2008 to January 2009, CSO did not release an official inflation rate, prices obviously continued to rise in Zimbabwe. Therefore, this chapter regards the end of hyperinflation in Zimbabwe to have occurred in January 2009.

⁷ Three re-denominations were conducted within the two and half years from August 2006 to February 2009. In August 2006, in the first re-denomination after independence, three zeros were removed from the currency: One thousand Zimbabwean dollar (ZWD) was re-valued to one Zimbabwean dollar (ZWN). The second was in August 2008, just two years after the first re-denomination. At that time, ten zeros were removed: ten billion

Zimbabwean dollar (ZWN) was re-valued to one Zimbabwean dollar (ZWR). The third was in February 2009, merely six months from the previous re-denomination. Twelve zeros were removed: one trillion Zimbabwean dollar (ZWR) was re-valued to one Zimbabwean dollar (ZWL). However, the new currency (ZWL) did not actually circulate among people, for the third re-denomination was conducted at the same time as the declaration of the multi-currency system by the RBZ. During the six months between the second and the third re-denomination, 27 denominations were released: denominations from one to one hundred trillion Zimbabwean dollars. During January 2009, for a single month just before the official dollarisation, five denomination notes were released, with the one hundred trillion note becoming the highest and last denomination.

⁸ According to the original calculation by Hanke and Kwok (2009), economists at the CATO institute in the US, on 14 November 2008, the monthly inflation rate reached 79 billion per cent, which implied that prices were doubling within one day (Hanke and Krus 2012).

⁹ One reason for this cash shortage has been reported to be the economic sanctions by the EU. In July 2008, Giesecke & Devrient GmbH, the German company that had been supplying Zimbabwe with paper for banknotes, exited their contract. This was 'in response to an official request from the German government and the EU, which had been calling for increased sanctions against Zimbabwe' (*The Zimbabwe Independent*, 3 July 2008).

¹⁰ To be more precise, at the beginning, when the withdrawal limit had just been reset, the amount still had some meaningful value. Yet, as time went by, this amount lost its value, because the RBZ did not increase the withdrawal limit in accordance with the inflation rate. For example, at the end of August 2008, it was 500 Zimbabwean dollars, which could only buy two loaves of bread.

¹¹ In October 2008, the government introduced a licence system, which allowed some supermarkets and retail shops to accept foreign currency in business transactions. It is true that through this partial legalisation, foreign currency gradually came to circulate. However, foreign currency was still in short supply and the problem of small change in foreign currencies remained even after the introduction of the licence system.

¹² Kamutsenzere ward of Mt. Darwin (Zvikomborero and Chigora 2010).

¹³ Money burning, put simply, is the exchange of foreign currency into a large amount of the Zimbabwean dollar, using the ‘higher’ rate through bank transfer, an economic strategy that emerged and rapidly spread in urban areas in 2008. For more information, see Gukurume (2015).

¹⁴ The term ‘framework’ in this chapter can be paraphrased as ‘webs of significance’, or ‘culture’, which is essentially semiotic, in Clifford Geertz’s sense. According to Geertz, ‘man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun ... and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning’ (Geertz 1973, p. 5). In typical classic ethnographies, it was anthropologists who needed to be in search of meaning, because local people ‘knew’ what was happening around them (cf. Nakagawa 2012). By contrast, this chapter deals with the issue that the local people, due to rapid social change, did not know what was happening around them; it was a situation in which not only the anthropologists but also the people are in search of meaning.

¹⁵ I suppose that Jones’s subjects were not an exception. Another article by Jones (Jones 2014) focuses more on difficulties and unsuccessful experiences rather than on subjects’ artfulness and success in dealing with the unconventional situation, a focus that sometimes indicates a will to properness among people more clearly than his previous article on the *kukiya-kiya* economy.

¹⁶ The content of the narratives in this article express each subject’s own personal view; they are not necessarily records of objective facts.

¹⁷ The prices in this narrative are based on the old currency, used before the re-denomination on 1 August 2008, in which ten zeros were removed from the old currency. Although this conversation was conducted a few weeks after the re-denomination, I leave the prices as they were expressed by the informant. About one month after re-denomination, people were still expressing prices using the old-currency unit, which was familiar to them and by which it was easy for them to grasp the value of prices.

¹⁸ Regarding Bourdieu’s concept of ‘hysteresis’, I originally learnt a lot from Nakagawa (2012), who deeply explores this concept, referring to an article by Bruno Karsenti (2011, quoted in Nakagawa 2012). Unfortunately, in this chapter, the argument is insufficiently addressed, mainly because it was difficult to translate the terms into English from the original language. Apart

from Nakagawa's article, Olga Shevchenko (2009) is also useful, describing the experience of ordinary people under the various crises in post-socialist Moscow as, in part, hysteresis, based on Bourdieu's concept. More interestingly, the 'hysteresis effect' is also an important key to understanding hyperinflation in economics, as some economists have guessed that it may be a reason why inflated local currency continues to remain in circulation under hyperinflation (Giovannini and Turtelboom 1994, p. 409). I have elsewhere examined, from an anthropological perspective (Hayakawa 2015), the question of the non-disappearance of hyperinflating currency, based on the case of Zimbabwe. I would like to attempt in a later publication to argue how the experiences of 'hysteresis' and the non-disappearance of the hyperinflating currency under hyperinflation are associated.

¹⁹ These are to be distinguished from the cars called 'emergency taxis (ETs)'. ETs regularly run on the road to carry people, and at least some of them have commercial licences, like commuter buses.

²⁰ In this chapter, I use the term 'morality' to indicate what we cannot easily explain the self-interested market discipline or the rules of law. This usage is vague and should be examined more deeply.

²¹ The former approach – how things should be – is related to what Geertz referred to as 'models *for* reality' and the latter, to 'models *of* reality' (Geertz 1973, p. 93).

²² Jones also carefully points out that 'straight', which is not *kukija-kija* or simply proper in conventional sense, did not disappear, even when the *kukija-kija* economy was widely dominant throughout the nation (Jones 2010b, p. 297). According to him, the imagination of straightness 'remains the ideological source of a good deal of personal and social activity' (Jones 2010b, p. 297).

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Thinking an African Politics of Peace in an Era of Increasing Violence¹

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The crux of the palaver is at the end, when the ‘guilty party’ is rehabilitated as a member of the community. In fact, there is not one ‘guilty party’, but several. All the members of the community feel guilty for not having succeeded in preventing conflict from taking root in their midst. The palaver rises above the law of retaliation, above justice as such ... Naturally the colonizers succeeded in playing down *the political role of the palaver*. They simply ignored it and, what is worse, concealed it, for they knew how powerful and especially how significant it was (Diong 1979, p. 83, emphasis added).

10.1. Introduction

It should be apparent to all that violent approaches to resolving popular contradictions are today (again) seemingly all-pervasive on the African continent. The patent inability of the (new democratic) African state to resolve popular contradictions has led to more or less vocal calls for ‘foreign help’, with consequences which are often too ghastly to contemplate. It is not simply here a question of state-deployed violence but also of popular violence (e.g. of an ethnic or xenophobic kind). In South Africa at least a ‘culture of violence’ has been systemically produced by specific forms of

political thought and practice and not simply inherited from a colonial/apartheid past. In Nigeria the state's insistence on addressing the Boko Haram phenomenon militarily has (predictably) completely backfired leading to the kidnapping of teenage children *à la* (originally Ugandan) Lords' Resistance Army. The only popular response on offer seems to be a moral one: 'free our girls'. The absence of alternative politics should be evident. This paper attempts to think a political alternative to violence founded upon concepts and categories inherent in African traditions; i.e. in actually existing (although often subterranean) popular practices. These cannot be understood as mere survivals but have been imaginatively altered and reconstructed to different extents and in different ways because of the necessity of people to cope with ongoing crises in their lives from the slave trade onwards. The paper then is fundamentally conceptual and methodological in order to redirect analyses and to begin to make alternatives thinkable; it is not prescriptive.

What I mean here in particular is that it is not my intention to set out or for that matter to evaluate strategies for achieving peace. For example, despite its otherwise extremely useful observations and recognition of the fact that 'communities of people have the agency to shape things' (Anderson and Wallace 2013, p. 176) and thus that political choices are possible, the recent text by Anderson and Wallace (2013) suffers from the limitations of not being able to transcend an 'interventionist' 'ngo-ist' view of 'conflict prevention'. In this manner the issue addressed is de-politicised and technicised while rather, my intention here is to insist on the need to alter our way of thinking in order to begin to think new concepts and categories which contribute to a politics of peace rather than restricting ourselves to seemingly neutral methods and techniques. Moreover, I would argue that the currently predominant

conceptions such as ‘civil society’, ‘governance’ or ‘citizenship’ *inter alia* (i.e. the language of liberal democracy) are of little use for thinking political subjecthood from an emancipatory perspective, which I maintain is what is required if one wishes to understand the contributions which singular popular experiences may at times make to a universal conception of humanity. We need to begin by thinking a politics of peace in relation to a politics of violence. And we can only think a politics of peace through the theoretical lens of an emancipatory politics because violence is systemic to the current form of capitalism within which we live.

It is now generally admitted that recourse to violence has become widespread and endemic in contemporary post-apartheid South Africa. The apparent legitimacy of violent solutions to personal or political contradictions and conflicts is so prevalent throughout society that it is probably accurate to speak (as many do) of a national ‘culture of violence’.² One should be careful to stress, however, that such a ‘culture’ cannot be grasped as a given reflection of social relations inherited from the past, resulting from an as yet incomplete ‘transition’ or as endemic to African society. Rather it is created and re-created today on a daily basis as an effect of specific political subjectivities and choices. Thus, despite the fact that such violence is overwhelmingly said to be criminal rather than political in nature, it is directly connected to what is seen implicitly, if not always explicitly, by the state as legitimate activity for the resolution of conflicts. To account for a culture then is to account for specific subjectivities.³ These are produced as effects of complex interactions in various domains of politics between power and its hegemonic modes of thought, on the one hand, and people’s reactions to them, on the other. The latter do not always simply conform to the former. Resistance may give rise to thought and not merely to knowledge; in other words, it may exceed the

subjective limits imposed by the state.

In state thinking, subjectivities are always seen as reflective ('expressive') of social location or place, for example 'class consciousness', 'national culture', 'ethnic identity', 'gender identity', 'masculinity' and so on and so forth. Rational thought, which is regularly in excess of state subjectivity, is simply effaced here; people are not supposed to think outside their social location or place. All these subjectivities, whether state 'expressive' subjectivities or 'excessive' subjectivities 'at a distance' from the state, provide the conditions of possibility of political agency in the sense that they pose parameters, problems and solutions of particular kinds in particular situations to which agency conforms. Thus it is held by power, for example, that the 'problem' of 'illegal immigrants' can be solved through increased repression by the state, which then smoothly translates into the deployment of violence against 'foreigners' and 'outsiders' by the people themselves, so long as they remain within the (expressive) subjective parameters of the 'foreigner' as the excluded other. Of course this amounts to the production of a politics of fear of the stranger (Neocosmos 2008, 2010). Moreover, the fact that perpetrators of xenophobic violence are rarely sanctioned contributes to a culture of impunity which further legitimates violence.

At the core of these particular political subjectivities then are state modes of thinking and practices. These in turn often remain unchallenged so that it becomes easier for them to appear to be reducible to the social attributes of the excluded; they become naturalised. The naturalisation of subjectivity is, as we know, regularly associated with the state and its modes of thinking so this effect should not surprise us; but the first step in the subjective process of naturalisation, it should be stressed, is one of social reductionism through which subjectivity becomes linked exclusively

to objective social location through its equation with interest. This reflection or expression of interest in political subjectivity is of course known as political identity.⁴

Yet the reduction of subjectivity to objective social location or place is not inevitable for it is possible to think beyond the interest allocated to place. People do often think (although clearly not always) beyond their objective social position and interests (beyond identity) simply because they are capable of rational thought. Therefore if we are to confront violent state political subjectivities in practice, there should be no hiding behind objective historical accounts in terms of processes of 'transition' for example, for this would only mean confronting a state politics with another state politics which would continue to occlude and hence to exclude people as thinking beings.⁵ In the absence of an alternative political subjectivity or consciousness, one which explicitly puts forward in its discourse and practice an alternative politics of peace from the point of people, the state politics of violence will continue unchallenged and therefore unabated. I have shown at length elsewhere how a politics of violence can be accounted for in Africa and in South Africa in particular (Neocosmos 2011). There is no need to repeat the arguments here, other than to note that a hegemonic subjectivity of political violence – a so-called 'culture of violence' – can be shown to be largely (but clearly not uniquely) an effect of a particular 'mode of state rule' (with its attendant subjectivities) deployed within specific 'domains of politics' one of which I call 'uncivil society'. Here I wish to argue that if an alternative political subjectivity is to become the object of thought – i.e. if it is to become possible to think such a politics – it must be 'excessive' of interest and founded on a principle of equality. It must first be thought as a resolution to contradictions within political community, as a politics of peace, and not as 'conflict

resolution' between antagonistic communities, however the latter may be conceived.

As a result, I have chosen to focus my reflections on four issues: first I wish to privilege concepts and categories because I think that there is very little theoretical thinking surrounding the African process of community healing and a politics of peace;⁶ second I believe it is important when thinking examples of such healing in South Africa to put our understanding within an African context, because there is a strong trend of South African exceptionalism which needs to be constantly combated. Thus I am more concerned to stress the similarities of South African practices with the rest of the continent than to highlight the differences between them; third the thinking of African practices in this regard takes place overwhelmingly today from within Western liberal perspectives so I wish to take a deliberate Afro-centric perspective here; and fourth I am concerned to make visible the regularly occluded aspects of popular tradition and thought which I believe form the raw material from which an alternative politics of peace can begin to be conceived and constructed.⁷ In general I wish to argue throughout that the essence of social healing in Africa consists of a form of politics among people who think and that consequently it cannot be technicised and professionalised without, at the same time, losing its healing powers.⁸ It necessarily presumes that people are capable of thinking 'excessively' beyond social interest as they search for alternatives in their daily struggles to exercise some kind of agency over their lives in conditions of political exclusion or 'inexistence'.

10.2. Handling Contradictions among the People: The Politics of Social Healing

It can be argued that central to African society have been

conceptions and procedures for resolving contradictions (both social and individual) which were always community based. It can even be suggested that the tradition goes back 4,000 years to the ancient Egyptian conception of *Mâât* which was concerned with maintaining and restoring balance to the community, especially after periods of violence and upheaval. For Cheikh Anta Diop (1991) for example, early African culture was founded on a moral philosophy of peace and was matriarchal in content. For Ifi Amadiume (1995, p. 42) 'the values of matriarchy seem to have generated anti-state and anti-centrist tendencies' as women resisted the imposition of patriarchal rule in Africa during the modern period (from 1593 onwards). Amadiume also argues that 'the matriarchal value and moral system which generated the concepts love, harmony, peace and cooperation, and forbade bloodshed, imposed a check on excessive and destructive masculinism' in ancient (pre-colonial) Africa (ibid., p. 47). Central here is a notion of 'social healing' where both individual and community are assumed to be so interrelated that contradictions in the one have effects in the other and vice versa. Given that the ancestors are also part of the community (and guide it), 'healing' or re-achieving a delicate balance, involves spiritual, physical and detailed ceremonial activity. Particularly in acephalous BaKongo societies (outside the Kongo kingdom) in the 17th–18th centuries, sophisticated organisations were developed, founded on spiritual beliefs, in order to resist social disintegration in the face of the twin disasters of the slave trade and colonialism, for example the *Lemba* healing cult (Janzen 1982). It is important to understand, however, that social healing processes were created/developed in response to crises. They can therefore be understood only as political practices driven by militants.

According to Janzen, 'Lemba, a major historic cult of healing, trade and marriage relations, came into being in the seventeenth

century in a triangular region extending from the Atlantic coast to Malebo Pool between today's cities of Kinshasa and Brazzaville, and from the Congo river northward to the Kwilu-Niari river valley' (1982, p. 3). 'In effect, although couched in the mold of a drum of affliction [a healing cult], *Lemba* was the governing order in a region much of which had no centralized institutions' (ibid., p. 4). Although its cultural dimensions, in particular, were not limited to this area, it is here that *Lemba* developed to its fullest extent outside the control of centralised states, especially that of the *Kongo* kingdom. In fact the Kingdom of *Kongo* was riven by civil wars throughout most of the 18th century which fuelled the slave trade as kings and contenders expanded their earnings by selling prisoners in large numbers (Thornton, 1993, p. 184). Jenzen cites the following figures: 'By 1750 in Cabinda alone 5,000 to 6,000 slaves were being exported annually; by the 1780s the three ports of Malemba, Cabinda and Loango Bay were processing 15,000 slaves annually' (1982, p. 34).

In the acephalous regions of the Lower Congo river, *Lemba* 'adapted conventional religious symbols to its own purpose, and developed a pervasive and unique ideology of healing relating to its concept of a stateless political order' (1982, p. 58). It developed in the areas where it controlled markets and trade, a 'unique political system' for which 'the notion of the sovereign was absent' (ibid., p. 72);⁹ *Lemba* developed 'in a society with a strong egalitarian ethic' (ibid., p. 318) and was able to regulate conflicts and restore calm through its 'laws of the market' (ibid., p. 72). *Lemba* was able to keep the area peaceful (the term '*lemba*' means 'calm', 'peaceful', ibid., p. 304) and to organise society without having recourse to hierarchies and a centralised bureaucratic authority or apparatus. It did so by regulating markets (through laws) and trade routes (which it controlled), by marriage arrangements between clans, by

reconstructing the idea of the family and hence by healing both individuals and society.¹⁰ Janzen continues:

... it is significant that inhabitants of the region made a selective choice for the kind of public order that emerged, that, instead of imposing a new order to deal with the coastal trade which resembled a state, they developed a solution to the challenge of trade which emphasised the redefinition of reality in therapeutic terms ... It is important to explore ... the way a society imagined alternatives open to itself and the consequences of such alternatives if taken (ibid., 324–5).

It seems then that *Lemba* was able to maintain relative peace in a region impacted heavily by the slave trade through its activities and perhaps also to ensure that this particular area was less affected by the slave trade than the area south of the river which was subject to internecine warfare. It was able to achieve this through a politics which distanced itself from state politics and which had mass support among the population, combining political, administrative, economic and spiritual features. It can be seen then that under enormous pressure from colonial forms of domination, Africans invented non-state forms of regulation which could resist slavery for a long time.¹¹ The view that local societies simply collapsed as a result of the impact of the slave trade and the power of Europeans is therefore not quite accurate. Janzen (1992) also traces the existence of such healing cults throughout the Bantu-speaking world.

At the core of the whole idea of the healing process is a traditional institution referred to by different names but known generally as the *Palaver* (from Portuguese *palavra* meaning word) or *Mbongi* in KiKongo.¹² Dismissed by colonialism as a mere

time-wasting exercise or ‘talk-shop’, the *palaver* was the central means of healing in societies from all corners of the continent. It was also often central to popular forms of rebellion against colonialism, and cultures developed which valued the skills of rhetoric and speaking. While war was often (and has regularly been conceived as) the normal way of resolving contradictions with those named as ‘the enemy’ (i.e. the ‘other’, the ‘excluded’, etc.), among people who were not enemies but friends and relatives (i.e. the ‘included’ in community), talking and persuading was the central method.

It is absolutely crucial to begin from this observation; namely that not all contradictions are of the same order – some are antagonistic and some are not – and consequently that different contradictions need to be resolved in different ways. Of course this is also dependent on who is counted as ‘included’ and who is ‘excluded’ but traditionally – if I may be allowed a generalisation – African societies were generally inclusive of strangers. Today when politics is seemingly reduced to war (politics is apparently today the ‘continuation of war by other or similar means’ for a number of writers),¹³ as even within the same party people are often referred to as enemies, such thinking is of paramount importance for it challenges the dominant legitimating of political violence.¹⁴ Of course, even between enemies, contradictions can often be resolved through talking – this is precisely what negotiations consist of – but this process is not the central issue of concern here.¹⁵ In any case, a political challenge to a state-propagated culture of violence, in order to take root, must arguably be developed ‘from below’. Rather, my main concern is to begin to put on the agenda a form of politics which can be referred to as a ‘politics of peace’. Not to be confused with pacifism as a moral injunction, a ‘politics of peace’ is concerned with the resolution of ‘non-antagonistic’ contradictions,

in other words it confronts differences and contradictions between people within ‘community’ however the latter may be conceived. It puts talking and persuasion at the centre of this process of the resolution of conflict, not coercive practices; politics here becomes close to an art form rather than to a science as war has regularly been understood.

How to begin to think through this process? First, it is important not to essentialise or to reify culture here. The dominant notion of ‘culture’ as a given set of norms and values, by insisting on action as habit or tradition or custom,¹⁶ occludes agency as reasoned practice. It effaces *subjectivation* – the process of production, of ‘becoming’ a subject – as it assumes an identity, a way of being and doing expressive of objective place and social location, always existing in potential and hence only in need of actualisation.¹⁷ Here people simply act within state induced subjectivities; it is taken for granted that they do things without knowing why they do them, and that is the reason we need sociologists and social science, in order to tell us why. As a result politics as reasoned practices excessive of location are removed from the domain of thought. Given what we have been told, namely that tradition and culture are created and re-created by interests and identities (e.g. Vail 1989), and particularly by power, the de-politicising and naturalising effects of such modes of thought should not surprise us.

Moreover, an African institution such as the *palaver* is not simply given in cultural memory waiting to be rediscovered (it is not ‘authentic’), but rather it is constantly created and recreated – the French philosopher Alain Badiou (2009) would say ‘resurrected’ – in different forms in different circumstances by political interventions from activists or the state. The use of the *Gaçaça* in Rwanda is a case in point. As is well known, this institution was

recreated by the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) post-genocide state as a way of processing the backlog of perpetrators (known as *génocidaires*) which could not possibly have been processed through Western courts.¹⁸ It also served two other functions: first as a form of community reconciliation and second as re-enforcing state power at local or community level. In other words, it was initiated as a ‘top-down’ process which may have worked in some respects but which was also sometimes undermined in others, for example by political rivalries and personal vendettas (Clark 2012). This outcome was helped by the fact that *Gaçaça* had already been a chiefly process before colonialism anyway (Reyntjens 1990).

Second, it is also important not to think simply in terms of ‘conflict resolution mechanisms’ underpinned by Western notions of ‘transitional justice’ or ideas of ‘democratisation equals Westernisation’ because for such conceptions, Western ideas of state liberal democracy are taken as a universal ideal to be attained while African tradition is simply understood as a leftover from the past defined by absences (by the absence of liberal features such as human rights, for example) and not as contemporary to modernity.¹⁹ The manner in which the *Gaçaça* experiment in Rwanda has been regularly dismissed in Western legal literature as a ‘kangaroo court’ is an example worth noting, although in other (often anthropological) literature it has been idealised as authentic. There is no linear leftover or development of traditional systems; rather such capacities are constantly being re-invented and practised to a greater or lesser extent in conditions of (post-) violent disruption.

The African state itself cannot impose any idea of the ‘traditional’ on its people without subjectivity collapsing into some ‘ethno-philosophical’ conception (in the sense developed by Hountondji 1997) divorced from popular practice; the latter can

only be successful if socially rooted and practically enacted at the 'grassroots' so to speak. The failure of the South African state's idea of '*ubuntu*' here is a recent example of this, but one can also refer to Mobutu's '*authenticité*' in Zaire and even to Nyerere's '*Ujamaa*', which despite their ideological differences were all ultimately 'top down' state conceptions. Finally the notion (widespread in South Africa) that the past can be 'mummified' in institutionalised memory (museums, statues, public buildings, etc.) avoids all discussion of contradiction as such and thus also evacuates from view the living politics of popular agency. Unsurprisingly such state activities are regularly contested while people attempt to re-appropriate their memories for themselves. It is thus central to my argument that popular agency must be the core focus of any discussion of social healing.

In brief then there are three major orientations associated with neo-colonial perspectives regarding resolving contradictions which must be avoided: (1) the technicisation of 'conflict resolution' so that the issue is reduced to one of management and expertise; (2) the 'anthropologising' of popular practices by a distant respectful outsider so that what people do is relegated to some form of (perhaps useful but ultimately alien) strangeness; (3) the uncritical celebration of 'memory' or 'tradition' (the past) by a nationalist state. In all cases the effect is one of 'de-politicisation'. From these it follows that social healing could not be turned into pedagogy and located at a university without losing its healing powers; it must remain a popular practice in order to be effective. It bears repeating that popular systems of healing must be understood politically, not in the sense of state, parties civil society, etc., but in the sense of popular practices of democracy (often using idioms which are not obviously 'political'). In other words it must be understood that people engage in healing practices in times of necessity, as with all

popular politics, in order to assert some form of control over their lives. These processes therefore require to be conceived as collective processes and decisions, which are after all what all popular politics consist of.

In fact, it is arguably because of the inability of the *episteme* of social science and history to recognise such practices as political that they have been systematically occluded, except as anthropological oddities and ‘traditional left-overs’ or even as exceptional occurrences in the case of historians (Neocosmos 2012b). A people’s politics which does not correspond to what the scientific *episteme* requires it to be – for example, to correspond to what the ‘political’ is meant to look like in Liberal or Marxist theory, i.e. as explicitly concerning the state, the civic, etc. – is dismissed and effaced under the terms ‘superstition’ (during colonialism) or ‘religion’ (under liberal post-colonialism) or ‘false-consciousness’ (Marxism) or ‘culture’ (multi-cultural respectful anthropology today) (ibid.). Resolving contradictions and healing simply becomes an oddity with some interesting aspects to it. If its importance is to be recovered, it must be understood as a collective popular political practice.

This argument has a number of consequences for analysis which I will illustrate with examples. First and foremost, the resolving of contradictions or (potential) conflicts within communities is not to be understood as resolving conflicts between antagonistic groupings but among community members as noted; in community there is no ‘other’ as everyone is included.²⁰ In this case then there is no enemy; outside community, the ‘other’ is the potential enemy. The whole point of a process sometimes referred to as ‘othering’, as for example in the case of xenophobic interpellation, is that people are first excluded from community as strangers and outsiders before being violently attacked as enemies.

It is crucially important to reflect on this as politics today regularly degenerates into violence and war simply because any potential other is viewed as an enemy, as in the recently rediscovered work of Carl Schmitt (1932/1996) for example where politics is understood first and foremost to be about identifying the enemy. But politics is not simply concerned with identifying and confronting an enemy; it also concerns ensuring balance and cohesion in community, i.e. 'healthy relations' among 'friends and family' without which a community cannot survive or exist in the first place. No society can live in a state of permanent crisis and while in crisis it cannot confront its enemies adequately anyway. So the idea of 'community healing' or 'social healing' implies, necessarily, the resolution of contradictions within community (among 'families and friends' – 'kith and kin'). Politics then concerns both friends and enemies, in fact, probably the former more than the latter; it is therefore absolutely crucial to be able to distinguish between the two.

To reduce all contradictions irrespective of whom they involve (friends or enemies) to a matter of 'conflict resolution' is to equate healing with negotiation and hence with technique. It is not accidental that negotiations between employers (representing along with others the interests of capital) and organised labour, i.e. class conflict (between class enemies)²¹ diverted onto a negotiating table, is referred to as 'collective bargaining'. The point in healing, however, is not simply to 'resolve' conflict and to 'bargain' with the other (so-called 'give and take'), but to reconfigure the community itself, to re-create on a new basis a collective balance (health) within the community. As a result, what is said to be the view of the ancestors plays a crucial role here as the ancestors themselves define the idea of balance which is then derived from a view of the past when the community was healthy. Who interprets the past through tradition and how it is interpreted therefore becomes crucial. It is

for this reason that elders and/or other knowledgeable people often play an important role in the process; yet knowledge is not all that is required, what is also necessary is an understanding of the truth that all are equal within the *palaver* process itself, at least if the *palaver* is to reflect the views of all and not exclude some. To sum up, the unfortunate theoretical reduction of social healing to a ‘conflict resolution’ technique thus has a number of negative effects:

(a) It obscures the crucial distinction between ‘enemies’ and ‘friends’ – both are treated in the same way, in most cases as enemies – but resolving contradictions between each of these requires different politics and different methods;

(b) It reduces the political process of healing to a technique which can thus be learnt by ‘experts’ (e.g. managers, negotiators, arbitrators), taught at universities and ‘applied’ in different contexts;

(c) It thus disempowers ordinary people by creating expertise and vesting power in experts and professionals;

(d) It simultaneously occludes politics (understood as popular collective action to enable control over one’s social environment) altogether and therefore disables collective decision making so that it further disempowers;

(e) It is therefore amounts to a typical neo-colonial conception of de-politicisation and disempowerment.

10.3. African Social Healing in Practice

The idea then must be to re-introduce the idea of politics (understood as above, i.e. as a process of collective ‘taking control’) back into thinking the social healing process. The ideas and practices of what can be called the ‘politics of healing’ become

quite clearly apparent in historical examples of the social healing process in different parts of our continent, although they take different forms; I will refer to four examples. It is apparent that when the *palaver* is under popular control it is a much more egalitarian and democratic process than when it is under state control.

Example 1: The Palaver (Mbongi) among the BaKongo

The *palaver* especially as developed among BaKongo people in Central Africa is a particularly important instance of a process of healing as it constitutes probably the best example there is of a popularly constructed African process, as interference by external (colonial) power was largely successfully resisted. It is clear that many different kinds of *palavers* have been practised over the years and that during the colonial period in particular, according to Wamba-dia-Wamba (1985), there were attempts at class differentiation by those with connections to power within rural communities which were often combated precisely by calling *palavers*. The following points from Wamba-dia-Wamba should be particularly noted; a *palaver*:

is a collective/individual cleaning-up of people as community (physically, biologically, anthropologically, sociologically and spiritually) ... The palaver appears as a mass bursting of active involvement in matters of the entire community of 'free' or 'liberated' (i.e. with no taboos, no restrictions, no diplomacy, etc.) speaking ... When a palaver is *artificially* organised by oppressive ruling powers, however, it degenerates into a *formal* exercise without life and (de)void of mass spontaneous creativity: people speak, as it is said, with 'tied tongues' or with 'tongues in the cheek' (ibid., pp. 3, 4, emphasis in original).

The description is clear; a *palaver* involves everyone equally otherwise, if organised under the aegis of the powerful, a politics of interest is practised in order not to offend them and the *palaver* fails to resolve contradictions. It follows then that a *palaver* is egalitarian and democratic or not at all. 'The palaver requires of and provides to each community member the right to carry out, and the obligation to be subjected to, an *integral critique* of/by everyone without exception' (Wamba-dia-Wamba 1985, p. 7). Important 'conflicts, emerging in, and threatening the life/existence of the community qua community, need to be resolved with appropriate methods' (ibid., p. 4). To resolve contradictions elicited by both internal and external forces, a struggle takes place over whom the ancestors represent. The dominant: 'present themselves as the real servants ... of the powers of the ancestors ... It is claimed that ... the ancestors [speak] through them, and the masses of the community must obey them without question and reservation' (ibid., pp. 5–6). Other members of the community oppose this and invoke the view of the ancestors through visions and dreams which affirm that 'the community has deviated from the ancestral line' (ibid., p. 6). They do this because 'to evoke the ancestors is to re-affirm their line, the one which allowed the community to reproduce' (ibid., p. 11). The *palaver*, therefore, through its struggle around the meaning of the 'ancestral line' helps resolve social conflicts and re-establish social egalitarian balance. To do so, it combines political processes with cultural representations, forms and rituals that constitute a complex language through which the *palaver* can be understood and therefore succeed.

One can see then that all social differences, hierarchies and relations fall away during the *palaver* so that these may be reconstituted on a new basis after the conflict has been resolved.

Given the absence of hierarchy within this political moment, specific intellectuals are charged with running the proceedings, articulating and clarifying the various positions expressed and adhering to rituals. These are the *Nzonzi*: ‘the collective self-criticism is carried out under the intellectual (dialectical) leadership of the *Nzonzi* who articulate positions and counter-positions in relation to the theoretical, ideological and symbolic requirements of the palaver’ (ibid., p. 11). In sum Wamba-dia-Wamba concludes:

There cannot be any people’s consensus through silence ... 2) Democracy is first of all a free collective and individual exercise of free speech by everyone and by the whole community ... 3) A true leader is one who listens tirelessly ... 4) [the] *Nzonzi*, has as a duty to surmount every obstacle to clarification, democratisation, simplification, creativity, etc. (ibid., p. 14).

It should be emphasised that this particular case illustrates a totally participatory, popular process which emphasises egalitarianism as the political solution to contradictions within African community: the ‘true essence ... [of the palaver is] freedom’ (Diong 1979, p. 83). The *Mbongi*, when run in a truly free manner, can be said to have been a site of ‘excessive’ politics at local level as it occurred at a distance from state thinking (both colonial and post-colonial). It is therefore not surprising that it was a threat to the colonial power as well as to those aiming to set themselves above the people; the undermining of the institution was required by both.

Example 2: The Shir in Somalia

According to Samatar’s (1982, pp. 26-7) detailed study:

The pastoral Somalis, egalitarian and lacking a partial authority to compose differences, readily resort to violence ... Force is exercised not only in action but also in words ... The pre-eminence of the spoken word has its roots in an essentially democratic society in which men who wield influence do so mainly through their powers of persuasion rather than coercion.

The Somali assembly is called the *Shir* and Somalis distinguish between four types of assembly which deal with different issues such as: justice, conflict resolution, clan praising and collective manufacturing of implements (Samatar 1982, p. 28). Both prose and poetry are used and rhetoric and poetry have developed into sophisticated forms. The two main offices in the *Shir* are those of the 'chairman' and the 'wordbearer', their role according to Samatar is 'simply ceremonial'. 'The function of the chairman is ... to oversee an orderly execution of business. The function of the wordbearer ... is to repeat loudly and clearly key parts of an argument after each orator so that everyone present has an opportunity to hear and understand what is being said' (ibid., p. 47). The 'wordbearer' here seems to fulfil a similar function to that of the *Nzonzi* in the *Mbongi* although with less responsibility as certain distinctions such as age and gender ones still operate within the *Shir* with the result that egalitarianism is somewhat compromised.

Samatar cites a very informative observation which sums up the centrality of the use of poetic language in the *Shir*: 'poetry is the central integrating principle without which harmonious relationships in society would be unthinkable' (ibid., p. 55). Evidently here verbal eloquence was fundamental to providing unity and social health ('harmonious relationships') and moreover this resulted in the fact that it was poetic oratory which was a central

feature in unifying Somalis in resistance to colonial domination in the *Dervish Movement*. Clearly then the politics of talking and persuasion in this case were achieved through specific highly sophisticated verbal forms of communication and rhetoric despite the absence of a complete egalitarian process in the *Shir* itself.²²

Example 3: The Gaçaça in Rwanda

This is perhaps the most well-known institution of this type today. As noted it was re-invented by the Rwandan state for the reasons already given. A few remarks will suffice. The literature on the *Gaçaça* is overwhelmingly located within Western conceptions of law, ‘transitional justice’ and ‘conflict resolution’. Clark (2010), the most detailed analysis I have seen to date of *Gaçaça* in practice, operates squarely within this paradigm as does Bornkamm (2012) who looks at the legal context of rules. There is usually little discussion of the origins of *Gaçaça* and only its post-genocide workings are discussed.²³ One exception is provided by Mironko and Rurangwa (2007, p. 203) who note:

Traditionally, *Gaçaça* was used at the local level to resolve disputes within one family or between close families ... The basic unit of *Gaçaça* was the council of elders, with all adult members of the community as observers. Although judgments were reached by elders, and not necessarily by popular vote or consensus, the principle behind each judgment was the restoration of social harmony, the re-establishment of order, the reintegration of the offender, and the reconciliation of the two parties.

It seems therefore that *Gaçaça* was already a state institution in pre-colonial times which would explain why it so easily collapsed during the colonial period and degenerated into arbitrariness after

independence (Mironko and Rurangwa 2007, p. 204). It was revived by the post-genocide state and has recently been terminated (in 2012). Most of the discussions in the literature concern whether it corresponded to Western conceptions of justice and its failure to discuss the crimes of the RPF itself (Clark 2012). Moreover of course there was evidence of manipulation by various powerful local political figures in specific local situations.

Yet at the same time the process has contributed to healing. Clark insists on using ‘healing’ only for overcoming the psychological traumas of individuals (Clark 2010, p. 258) and reserves the term ‘reconciliation’ for ‘communal healing’. There is a clear reticence to discuss African conceptions of social healing here, while the Rwandan state, despite its African gestures, is fundamentally concerned with establishing ‘social cohesion’ like all states.²⁴ Given the history of animosity between Tutsi and Hutu in particular and the minority nature of ethnic Tutsis who run an ethnic state, this fear is understandable although not condonable. What is particularly clear then is the distinction between the popular concerns and popular democratic thinking in the first two examples and the much more state-focused concerns of the third. Evidently this is linked to the character of the political processes in question: outside (‘at a subjective distance from’) a central state in the first two, statist in the third.

Example 4: Judiya in Darfur (Sudan)

An important detailed study here is that undertaken by Tubiana et al. (2012, p. 37). They note that:

Judiya is the main term for traditional justice and reconciliation mechanisms in Darfur. The term is derived from *jud*, which translates to generosity or magnanimity in Arabic. The *judiya* process is

facilitated by *ajawid* (sing. *ajwad*). The central tenet is that of a consensual mediation that brings together a commonly acceptable outcome for the parties. Problems are not solved by punishment, but by a common acceptance of social ties ... When Darfurians want to say that a mediator is good, they will label him an *ajwad*, and when they want to indicate that a conference was good, they will call it a *judiya*. Both terms are strongly positive.

Here the central figure in the process comes under a different name and clearly from important men with status: 'traditionally, *ajawid* are chosen among elders and notables known for both their neutrality and their competence in traditional matters. Elders or notables will put themselves forward to serve as *ajawid*, or be recommended by leading members of the community' (ibid. p. 57).

We are told that the foundational component of customary justice and reconciliation in this context is material compensation: the offending party must compensate the aggrieved party for the offence. If there was loss of limb or life, the compensation comes in lieu of blood. Compensation is also, and implicitly, the recognition of responsibility, and can therefore lead to reconciliation. Compensation can be ordered by the court, recommended by *ajawid* or other mediators, or agreed by consensus by the parties. It comes in three forms: *diya* (blood money), *ta'wid* (compensation for non-human losses), and *khasarat* (costs) (ibid., p. 27). These institutions resemble more closely what are known throughout the continent as 'customary courts' founded on tradition.

It comes as no surprise that these customary courts were first recognised and institutionalised by British colonialism and subsequently by the post-colonial state; they are controlled by 'traditional leaders' and are comparable to 'traditional courts'

elsewhere on the continent in the sense that they form the bottom level of the official judicial system. There is very little evidence of popular politics in either the government-controlled areas or the rebel-controlled areas yet, at the same time, these courts retain a popular legitimacy which customary courts in South Africa do not possess.

The first priority of the *ajawid* is to stop ongoing violence. Today, the first step is often to call the police, at least in government-held areas, where most of the population lives. This is in keeping with a tradition now so distant it has become a legend, according to which elders of both sides would physically restrain their youth with rope to stop the violence and allow a *judiya*. Using police rather than rope began during colonial times – perhaps more an opportunity to show the military power of the *bakuma*, the government, than any attempt at Solomonic justice (Tubiana et al. 2012, p. 61).

Darfurians agree that they favour *judiya* over any court because it is more efficient and swifter – not least because, unlike the courts, it has no appeal process. Above all, *judiya* is less risky and less divisive. It is less risky because the outcome is the result of a negotiation, and therefore the process offers more control than that depending on an unpredictable court process. It is less damaging because it offers an opportunity to manage relations with an individual or group one is likely to have to deal with in the future. ‘When the government [that is, the statutory court] imposes a sentence, it is cutting ties between people,’ a camp leader in eastern Chad explained (ibid., p. 62).

Darfurians will say that a successful *judiya* involves truth-telling, which in turn allows for, and obliges the other party to, discount in the compensation, forgiveness, and a lasting reconciliation. ‘It is very

important to tell the truth. To be forgiven, you must tell the truth,’ said a Fur intellectual who has been a close observer of reconciliation processes (ibid., p. 66).

It appears that *Judiya* possesses a high level of legitimacy in Darfur despite its state character, but its functions are clearly limited to the legal resolution of conflict and do not extend to social healing. Interestingly this lower state court brings forth a distinction between state and government. The former’s legitimacy is recognised while the latter’s partiality is emphasised:

Making an incident the responsibility of many people creates powerful social disincentives for violence. Darfurians of all sides are quick to point out that the conflicts of the past twenty-five years show what happens when a powerful external actor – the government – enables local groups to become immune to traditional conflict mitigation processes by arming them, giving them political support, and undermining the mechanisms that should provide a disincentive to violence. This is particularly so among groups that have been militarized by the government and gradually integrated into official armed forces’ (ibid., p. 68).

In sum we can note that despite what may be called its ‘statisation’ this ‘customary court’ has nevertheless attempted to mitigate and resist the effects of violence in an extremely violent environment through disincentives to violence such as collective social responsibility. The four examples outlined exhibit different levels of statisation of the politics of peace. In the last two cases (*Gaçaça* and *Judiya*) the institutions are unmistakably state institutions and are restricted to court functions; thus although we may be able to speak of reconciliation, there is much less evidence

of healing as the processes are less democratic than the *Mbongi* and even the *Shir*. The levels of variation in these processes give some idea of the rich political traditions available for resolving contradictions among the people in Africa.

10.4. Some Popular Practices of Social Healing in South Africa

In South Africa, given that the local state organs of ‘customary courts’ have largely lost their popular legitimacy, as they were used as systems of control under colonialism and apartheid, the experience of popular assemblies with an element of healing is mostly to be found in the practices of some popular social movements. If we except the state structured Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) process in the 1990s, such assemblies are practised in conditions which do not receive official recognition. Their presence in popular practice makes this process much more in conformity with the first two examples I mentioned (it takes place ‘at a distance’ from state institutions) although the level of utilisation of ritual and symbolism is much more limited to the sacrifice of a small animal (poverty of course plays a central role here). Given the extreme effects of colonial and apartheid domination during which the repressive powers of the ‘tribal’ chieftaincies were systematically bolstered, including via their control over ‘customary courts’, popular assemblies are predominantly an affair outside official ‘culture’. At the level of the traditional state what are performed are formal ceremonies such as the ‘tradition of cleansing violence’ performed by the Nkosi (chief) himself²⁵ while ‘traditional courts’ in rural areas mainly serve the chieftaincy to control the population and enable the plunder of resources from the people (Mamdani 1996).²⁶

Popular traditions of social healing therefore are in need of

resurrection in South Africa. The organisation with the most evident current experience of this is Abahlali baseMjondolo, the movement of shack dwellers which originally began in Durban. Central to Abahlali's conception of politics is what they call 'living politics' which:

[S]imply refers to the practice according to which any shack-dweller (whether member or not) can turn to the movement with her problem, and anyone can raise any point of concern at any gathering of the movement ... In addition to the conviction that everyone's suffering is equally unjust ... this implication also points to the second sense which living politics points to. Beyond the healing effects of 'providing that ear'; 'something that people are craving', in this second meaning, living politics attends to formulating a responsibility to effectively deal with the problem which the cry is about (Selmeczi 2012, p. 508).

A specific example of living politics concerns the way Abahlali responded to violent attacks on their leaders prior to the mass attacks in Kennedy Road (Durban) in September 2009. Rather than launching revenge attacks, they discovered who their assailants were and entered into discussion with their grandmothers (given the predominance of elderly women in Abahlali, this is very pertinent) who then put pressure on the youth to come to a reconciliation meeting. The community was reconciled after much discussion and an animal was bought by the offending parties and sacrificed.²⁷

Given the multi-ethnic character of Abahlali (and of course the multi-ethnic character of shack-dweller communities), an elected committee is often entrusted with resolving differences and the offending parties provide reparation in the form of a small animal (e.g. a chicken). Moreover, tensions in meetings are sometimes

diffused by an elderly woman who goes into a trance and communicates with God (or the ancestors) who then insists on the need to maintain unity. The need for unity would then be addressed through outpouring emotion rather than rational argument but the effect is the same.²⁸

This kind of healing politics then is integral to the politics of Abahlali. It works because it is founded on popular participatory democratic practices along the lines of the first two African examples noted above. People feel involved and are indeed involved in the process of devising politics collectively; differences are subsumed under a politics of excess for all. Of course, community meetings of this sort are accompanied by rituals borrowed from African 'tradition' as well as from Christianity, but what is central is the ability of everyone to talk and to be listened to as in the case of the *palaver* noted above. While these practices are not necessarily 'post-violence', the latter are relatively easy to organise in those cases where a culture of discussion and debate within community has been fought for and instituted already. Given the multi-ethnic character of the community and the leadership of the organisation, there is somewhat less possibility of traditional chiefs taking over the running of these politics and pushing them in an authoritarian direction. In any case Abahlali's politics of peace are being re-invented. They do not conform to a formalistic traditional model although they perform similar functions to the more formal African processes discussed above.

What all the above examples strongly suggest is that a genuine popular politics of healing and the resolution of contradictions in community has taken many different forms in Africa, but what needs to be stressed is that such a politics is successful when it is already founded on ongoing popular democratic practices which involve everyone equally, irrespective of the cultural particularities

within which it may operate. The forms taken by popular assemblies are clearly the outcome of struggles: when the state or local elites have established control over the process (e.g. *Gaçaça*), the content of the popular assembly differs fundamentally from when it is directly under popular control (e.g. *Mbongi*). In South Africa, popular forms of resolving contradictions in communities are also clearly located within an understanding of the politics of healing. In other words they are not a technique with *potentiality* but the deployment in *actuality* of ancient methods adapted to current needs. They are in many cases much more humane than anything the criminal justice system can provide. Their importance is increased by the fact that poor people are equally alienated both by the workings of the criminal justice system and by the ‘traditional/customary courts’ in the rural areas over which chiefs exercise their arbitrary powers. The question therefore remains how can a politics of social healing be made central to a politics of peace and how can it be made more widespread so that it acquires a more prominent place in politics today?

10.5. Conclusion: Rethinking Time

It needs to be noted that none of the examples of social healing in action which I have provided are based within parties and I know of none which are. Of course it can be objected that the majority consist of examples culled from ‘tradition’, yet that would be a mistake. As I have already stressed, these ‘traditions’ are made, they are contemporary with ‘modernity’ in either its colonial or post-colonial forms. In the case of Abahlali, of course, we have the only ‘non-rural’ example provided, yet I also feel that the rural–urban distinction is largely misleading because it is invariably associated with the supposed ‘traditional’ character of the former

and the ‘modern’ character of the latter. This is an unhelpful procedure. The point is that the political subjectivities associated with parties are not conducive to the resolution of non-antagonistic contradictions as they are unable to activate a principle of equality. Moreover, parties regularly deploy a militaristic subjectivity which is geared to ‘othering’ as a prelude to seeing the other as the enemy. This is largely because parties are subjectively geared towards attaining state power to the exclusion of other parties. The obvious consequence of parties’ focus on attaining power is that people are not considered as capable of thought, only experts are for only they can fathom the objective. People divided into classes, for example, are thought as ‘forces’ but never as capable of thinking for themselves as in the militaristic notion of the ‘objective balance of class forces’, identified by the knowledgeable, on which the attainment of state power is ultimately said to depend. However *a politics of peace*, as I have begun to outline it above, *necessarily assumes that people think*, although the politics of excess implied by such thinking is also influenced by the parameters it exceeds.

The same is not true of NGOs – another ‘modern’ institution – as their concern is not with capturing power but assuring the interests of their funders. This is not to assume that NGOs are open to the idea that people think, of course, rather simply that they operate with a different subjectivity from that of parties. There have been a number of NGOs which have concerned themselves with violence and peace in South Africa (e.g. the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, CSVr). But overwhelmingly these NGOs think within Western parameters which remain statist, especially those of ‘transitional justice’, (parliamentary) democracy, human rights and so on, and are consequently unable to open up to the thought of alternative popularly-based politics as well as to the fact that people are capable of developing their own political

thinking. The main point however remains: it is largely impossible for a politics of peace to be thought from within a party-type perspective.

There is no alternative to taking popular practices of social healing seriously. In particular, the *palaver* itself is the clearest model of such practices located deep within African humanistic traditions. It should be apparent that a number of features are central to the traditional *palaver*. These include the total freedom allowed to everyone, irrespective of their social location, to speak openly ‘without fear or favour’. They also include the central role of those highly respected intellectuals, the *Nzonzis* known under different names in other contexts. However at the core of the *palaver* – and perhaps its most important feature – lies its understanding of time as following other requirements than those demanded by a utilitarian rationality. Given the centrality of time in biological healing processes, the *palaver* seems to suggest that time is also crucial in relation to social healing, in other words, in resolving contradictions among the people. If the idea of resolving such contradictions is to provide a unity of purpose in the community, then time has to be thought of differently. The fact that the colonial enterprise could not comprehend its importance, so that the term ‘*palaver*’ came to signify a waste of time, merely confirms the fundamental contradiction between the capitalist foundation of colonialism, on the one hand, and the universality of humanity, on the other. The dismissal of the *palaver* by colonial capitalist subjectivities, in fact, symbolises both their contempt for humanity and their systematic effacing of popular politics. I wish to end these considerations by citing the philosopher Alain Badiou who, in his discussion of the disastrous effects of the deployment of ‘revolutionary’ violence and terror in an attempt to resolve political contradictions in emancipatory struggles, insists on the need for a

different conception of time attuned to humanity. This conception of time does not attempt to compete with the urgency inherent in the market. It should be apparent then that in the *palaver*, Africans have invented a form of social healing for the emancipation of humanity as a whole:

... what experience shows is that, over the long term, neither antagonistic action, based on the military or police model, directed against enemies, nor Terror within your own camp can resolve the problems created by your own political existence... Ultimately, every political problem boils down to a problem of the unity of orientation on an issue that is collectively defined as being the main issue of the moment or of the situation. Even a victory over the enemy depends on the subjective unity that was the victors'. Over the long run, the key to a victorious treatment of antagonisms lies in the correct handling of contradictions among the people – which also happens to be the real definition of democracy ... There is a necessary slowness, both democratic and popular in nature, which is particular to the time of the correct handling of contradictions among the people ... What ... [that paradoxical] violence especially destroys is the time of emancipation, which is on the scale of the life of humanity, not on that of the market's profit cycle (Badiou 2013, pp. 9–11, emphasis in original).

In addition to the question of the need to rethink the problem of time, it is also important to stress the centrality of an understanding of the historical evolution of gender relations in Africa for an understanding of a politics of peace. While I have noted the importance of women in the contemporary struggle for the peaceful resolution of contradictions among the people in Africa, Amadiume (1997, p. 95) reminds us that:

Accumulation through the appropriation of the fruit of other people's labour means that appropriators resort to more and more violence, since human beings – as history rightly shows – always rebel against oppression in one form or another. In Africa, irrespective of internal contradictions and conflicts, the most effective and destructive instruments of oppression were imported from outside that continent: horses and firearms which were used to kill, capture and enslave. The ideology of violence was monolithic masculinist ideology, which ... had roots in European social systems. It entered Africa gradually through Islam ... it is generally agreed that it was Europeans who first domesticated the horse and used it as an instrument of war ... This was also the case with gun powder, which the ancient Chinese and Egyptians in their concern with balance and harmony only used medicinally and not for destruction and murder. The important point is that with the introduction of firearms into Africa in the sixteenth century by European colonizers and slavers, by sea, the whole of the African continent became totally militarised.

What Amadiume perhaps overlooks somewhat is Africans' capacity to resist militarisation through the matriarchal systems which she analyses so clearly. In John Janzen's work, 'drums of affliction' or 'healing cults' or 'rituals of affliction' (*ngoma*) are shown to still be important ways through which Bantu-speaking peoples of Central and Southern Africa deal with individual and collective misfortune and affliction (Janzen, 1992). These healing rituals in which women play a prevalent, if not predominant, role are still widespread. In fact, Janzen remarks that:

In colonial and postcolonial Africa, the logic of the use of affliction and adversity for the organisation of social reproduction has contributed to the perpetuation, even the proliferation, of cults

of affliction, often in a way that has baffled government authorities and outside observers. Cults have arisen in connection with epidemics, migration and trade routes, shifts in modes of production, and in response to changes in social organization and the deterioration of juridical institutions. Colonialism itself undoubtedly generated many of the cults of affliction that appeared in the twentieth century. Post-independence conditions have continued to provide grist to the mill of cult formation ... The role of ngoma networks in popular resistance in South Africa's townships is not yet known to scholars, but it may be substantial (*ibid.*, pp. 75, 77).

With such social healing cults so widespread and so resilient, which proliferate 'where misfortune is rampant and where social chaos prevails' (*ibid.*, p. 79), it would then seem that the people of Africa themselves are able to utilise tradition in order to exceed state subjectivity and to thereby resist and survive its coercive power. Potentialities are therefore waiting to be utilised in any thought of emancipation. In so doing it should be apparent that these excessive subjectivities are not to be reduced to real political terms only but involve complex processes of symbolisation and rituals. These also need to form part of any thought of emancipation.

Notes

¹ Thanks to Jacques Depelchin, Richard Pithouse and Premesh Lalu for comments and advice; errors are mine.

² One recent example of a state discourse of violence concerns the utterances of Cyril Ramaphosa, ex-trade union leader, one of the richest businessmen in the country, mine owner and currently deputy president of the ANC who was said to have 'declared war' on those he sees as threatening the National Union of Mineworkers and the ANC alliance in general at a meeting in Rustenburg on May Day 2013. It was reported that

his slogan for the day was: ‘one industry, one union, one federation, one country, one party’.

<http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2013-05-13-num-fighting-fire-with-fire/#.UZKQEKIsCS0> (last accessed 19 September 2015).

³ For a detailed outline of the following argument, see Neocosmos (2012a).

⁴ The state formation of political identities in Africa has been at the core of Mamdani’s work (Mamdani 1996, 2001, 2009).

⁵ A common example here is the confronting of an ethnic identity politics with a national identity politics in Africa; the former supposedly represents the traditional violent past, the latter the peaceful present of democratic modernity.

⁶ The argument here is influenced particularly by Wamba-dia-Wamba (1985).

⁷ Of course it would not do, for example, to begin from a Ghandian conception of *Satyagraha* here as this is founded squarely within Hindu culture.

⁸ This means to say that social healing is not to be understood philosophically as a (‘subjugated’, ‘indigenous’ or whatever) form of *knowledge* but as a (possible) *truth* understood in Badiou’s (2009) sense of a political process of becoming of a (collective) subject (or ‘subjectivation’); here truths are not discovered, they are produced and are intelligible beyond the world which produced them as they are universally valid.

⁹ Ifi Amadiume (1995, p. 45) refers to West African acephalous societies as ‘anti-state decentralised political systems’ an expression which has the merit of stressing their explicit opposition to state power and not simply the absence of a state. From the evidence regarding the extent to which they went in order to secure their autonomy, it seems indeed that Amadiume’s term is applicable to these BaKongo societies.

¹⁰ ‘It is more than therapeutic techniques; it is rebuilding society to make human dignity meaningful again. Lessons drawn from this process of social healing should be important for any politics of peace. Lemba was conceptualised as “mukisi wamfunisi nakanda”—“a knowledge and practice of re-peopling the clan”’ (Wamba-dia-Wamba 2013, p. 15).

¹¹ Janzen sees Lemba as gradually succumbing to the coastal slave trade in the late 19th century and to colonisation following on from it in the 20th century. Lemba survived for three centuries in this form according to

Janzen (1982, p. 6).

¹² Strictly speaking the *Mbongi* refers to the place where *palavers* are sometimes held. The activity of ‘palavering’ itself is called *Ntungasani* (Wamba-dia-Wamba personal communication).

¹³ See Foucault (2003) for example.

¹⁴ See president Zuma’s recent utterances on the ‘enemy within the party’ in the run up to the ANC’s December 2012 congress in Mangaung. <http://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/beware-of-enemy-within-zuma-warns-1.1402085> (last accessed 16 August 2015).

¹⁵ ‘[In politics] killing simply produces the illusion of the disappearance of a problem rather than the reality of its solution’ (Badiou 2012, p. 130, my translation).

¹⁶ For example as in the notion of ‘*habitus*’ in the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu’s work.

¹⁷ The idea of subjectivation is central to the thought of a number of French philosophers including that of Jacques Rancière. See Ross (2009) who discusses Rancière’s thought on this issue at some length.

¹⁸ It may be important to ask whether the genocide of 1994 would have occurred had the *Gaçaça* been in widespread use; in any case the state has now switched *Gaçaça* on and off which says much regarding the weakness of popular politics in that country.

¹⁹ There is no space to argue this point here but I have done so in detail elsewhere (Neocosmos 2011). It should be clear that democratic struggles in Africa (e.g. in the 1980s) as well as in North Africa in 2011 did not always equate democratisation with Westernisation; it should be recalled that there was a struggle over different conceptions of democracy in Africa in the 1980s. See Ake (2003) for example.

²⁰ There is an additional empirical reason for beginning with a politics of the handling of contradictions within community: most wars today in Africa are not between countries but internal to them.

²¹ Some may recall ex-Prime Minister Thatcher referring to trade unions in Britain as ‘the enemy within’.

²² Although I have not had the opportunity to check the empirical evidence for this, one could speculate that the rise of ethnic politics in postcolonial Somalia (eventually finding expression in warlordism) was not unrelated to the decline of the *Sbir* as a site of popular politics.

²³ Although Bornkamm (2012, p. 33) notes the following about the

pre-colonial *Gaçaça*. 'The principal objective of dispute settlement was not to render justice. Customary legal rules were only a starting point for the discussion. The primary objective was always to restore peaceful relations within the community, which could even justify an unfair result. While the damage caused would certainly have to be compensated to some extent, the wrongdoer also had to be fully reintegrated in the community. In fact many traditional African societies perceived formal justice according to pre-established rules as working contrary to reconciliation. It was believed that a final judgement would only further exacerbate a conflict rather than settle it'.

²⁴ It should be noted that the idea of 'social cohesion' is on the state's agenda in Africa at the moment as a number of governments like to refer to its necessity given the perceived 'challenges' in current society resulting from the failure of nation-building. The South African state in particular has been using this term more and more. Interestingly the term rarely used by the state is 'inclusion'. The reverting to the terminology of 1950s conservative 'functionalist' sociology is itself interesting and worthy of note as it tells us something regarding hegemonic state subjectivity in the current sequence.

²⁵ See the report of King Zwelithini's performance of rituals to cleanse perpetrators of violence (*Times*, 6 November 2012).

²⁶ It is in this sense that the South African government's Traditional Courts Bill is fundamentally oppressive of rural people, although most opposition has taken a different perspective emanating as it has from human rights discourse and gender rights in particular. See Clappaert (2012) for example.

²⁷ Abahlali activist, personal communication.

²⁸ Abahlali activist, personal communication.

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“READING THIS BOOK INVITES ONE TO PUT TO CENTER-STAGE CONTEXTUALIZED HITHERTO UNDERRATED VALUES OF AFRICAN POTENTIALS IN CONSIDERATION OF CONFLICT RESOLUTIONS AND CO-EXISTENCE. A VERY GOOD NARRATIVE FOR THOSE SEEKING A NON-ROMANTICIZED CRITIQUE OF AFRICAN POTENTIALS IN ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGE OF RELEASING POTENTIALS OF PEOPLE’S AGENCY FOR SOLVING AFRICA’S PROBLEMS.”

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As Julius Nyerere once noted, Africa has largely been the continent of peace, though this fact has not been widely publicised. In reality, Africa possesses dynamic potentials for resolving contradictions and violent ruptures that colonial authorities, post-colonial states and global actors have failed to capture and capitalise upon. Drawing on the everyday experience of rural and urban people in Zimbabwe, South Africa, Namibia and Zambia, this book brings into conversation leading Japanese scholars of Southern Africa with their African colleagues. The result is an exploration in comparative perspective of the fascinating richness of bottom-up ‘African potentials’ for conflict resolution in Southern Africa, a region burdened with the legacy of settler capitalism and contemporary neoliberalism. The book is a pacesetter on how to think and research Africa in fruitful collaboration and with an ear to the nuances and complexities of the dynamic and lived realities of Africans.

SAM MOYO, the widely respected scholar of African political economy and land issues, was Director of the African Institute of Agrarian Studies, Zimbabwe.

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